

Readings on Joshua 2

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the significance of Jordan as a symbol of death and Christ's death as the key to understanding it, emphasizing the importance of reckoning oneself dead and carrying about the dying of Jesus.

Scripture: Romans 6:3

Topics: "Identification with Christ", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

John Nelson Darby explores the significance of crossing the Jordan River as a metaphor for the believer's identification with Christ's death and resurrection. He emphasizes that true spiritual progress requires recognizing oneself as dead to sin and the world, which is essential for entering into the fullness of life in Christ. The sermon also discusses the importance of returning to Gilgal for spiritual renewal and the necessity of being set apart for God to effectively engage in spiritual warfare. Darby highlights that understanding our position in Christ is crucial for overcoming the challenges of life and maintaining a pure walk with God.

Transcript

We just touched on chapter 4 without saying anything of the stones taken out of Jordan.

Ques. Some remark was made about the priests' feet being necessarily dipped in first?

They had to go into the place of death; and the moment Christ touched the power of death, it was broken. The priests continued to stand in the midst of Jordan while the people passed over, but the power of death was at once broken, the waters were cut off.

Ques. Why priests, and not Levites?

Well, it was not exactly priestly service, though it was what priests had to do.

The exercise of Christ's priesthood in heaven is a distinct thing. Dying for us is one thing, but now He is there for us, poor feeble creatures that we are on earth. Both priest and victim, He made propitiation, and died; that is what He had to do as priest, but that was not, properly speaking, priestly service. In the sacrifices of old, the priest did not kill the victim, his service began with taking the blood after the animal had been killed.

424 Ques. Would the carrying of the Ark by the Levites in the wilderness be more direct service to God?

Yes, just so. But as to death, Jordan is Christ's death and our death with Him. God pronounces us dead with Christ, and then by faith we reckon ourselves dead; we have always to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, and in that way death worketh in us. Only, it is impossible for death to work in me until I begin by reckoning myself dead.

Ques. Monks try to arrive at it without being dead?

Yes, and that makes all the difference. A very real thing it is that goes on when death works in us. And by death we are justified from sin, too. If a man is lying down on the floor dead, you cannot charge him with having lusts, or a wicked will, or a bad nature; he is dead. So God condemned sin in the flesh, for He is a holy God. But what am I to do seeing I have the flesh in me? It was condemned in the cross, and I find the condemnation gone, and death come. Christ had no sin, yet as made sin for us, the condemnation is past in His death.

Ques. But many a person has passed through the seventh chapter of Romans who has not passed Jordan?

I do not think so. A good many people have the truth in their minds who have not passed the Jordan.

Jordan in itself is not experience, but 2 Corinthians 4 is experience. In Colossians 3, it is, "Ye are dead," and if dead, I am dead to everything; then as result, one cannot press it too much, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead." In Colossians, not only are our sins forgiven through Christ dying for us (which is the first thing we want as guilty), but when a man can say, "I am crucified with Christ," as in Galatians, then he is over Jordan. Ye are dead - mortify therefore. 'Mortify' is power; 'death' is weakness. And it is, "mortify . . . your members" - not, a living thing. When I apprehend what God says about me, that I am crucified with Christ, that is Jordan. Then follows the carrying about the dying of Jesus.

Next comes Gilgal. Again and again they went back to Gilgal. When that place was lost practically, as in Judges, then the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bochim. But in Joshua they always went back to Gilgal.

Ques. Is 2 Corinthians 4 going back to Gilgal?

It is so practically. We go back to Gilgal in order to be able to fight. We must take our place there for ourselves with God; we shall not go on well in our work and service, if we do not learn more and more of ourselves with God. We shall not have God with us in it, except as we are with Him.

425 Ques. What is going back to Gilgal?

Carrying out with God our own circumcision of heart. It is at Gilgal, too, that the reproach of Egypt is rolled away.

Ques. Does not many a Christian try to reach Gilgal who has not passed over Jordan?

That is the monkish idea again.

In Colossians 2 we read, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh ('of the sins' should not be there) by the circumcision of Christ." Now there we have Gilgal and Jordan a little identified; but it is important to see that we are dead to the world, as well as dead to sin; for if a man is

dead, he is dead to everything.

Ques. You said that they went back to Gilgal in order to be able to fight for God; why did they go back there after fighting for God?

Because they had to fight again. Their being successful in fighting was not the same thing as knowing themselves before God. The only way to maintain ourselves pure is to get before God, for self will crop up. In order to work rightly, we must get back before God, and learn that we are nothing. Self intrudes itself into gospel work as much as into anything else. Says one, 'we have had fifty conversions.' Oh, I say, you have had them, have you!

Ques. Were the forty thousand in chapter 4 circumcised?

I suppose so.

Ques. Do you connect Gilgal with the sword of Goliath that David had?

Well, yes, I do; that is to say, when he had it.

Ques. "I am crucified with Christ," is that not the Red Sea as well as Jordan?

Well, it is Jordan, but in a certain sense the Red Sea and Jordan are the same thing. Only, remember, there was no Ark in Egypt. At the Red Sea, it was death 'for,' not 'with.' The two coalesce; but the Red Sea was going, out, while Jordan was going in, there being no wilderness in the purpose of God. If I am only across the Red Sea, I have not yet reached the rest in Canaan which is the purpose of God for me; but when I am in Canaan, then I am seen in my new standing altogether.

426 Ques. In Rahab's case, she says that the dread of God's people had fallen upon the inhabitants of the land as soon as they heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea (chap. 2:9, 10); and then, again, their heart had melted when they heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Jordan; chap. 5:1?

Ques. And there was the leisurely way they went, with the distance between the people and the Ark?

Yes. No one but Christ could pass through death in all its power. He alone could do so, and dry it all up for us: "Thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Ques. They were called upon to sink themselves too?

Yes, and unless we are very practically set apart to God, we can know nothing really about Jordan or anything else.

Ques. How are souls to be induced to pass through Jordan?

I do not think they ever do until they have got sick of themselves, and are glad to get rid of themselves.

Ques. Some say they go straight into the land?

That was Pearsall Smith's doctrine; he wanted to jump right over Romans 7 into Romans 8. I do not believe we can ever do that.

Ques. Was it not the good report of the land that drew them over?

Yes, it was so in the starting; but the question was as to how were they to get across the Jordan when they found its waters overflowing all the banks. That is what people find out with their bad tempers or anything else; they cannot get rid of it though they wish it an hundred miles off.

Ques. When the Queen of Sheba, who had nothing but the good things of this world, got to Solomon, she lost sight of them entirely?

Just so; if a man is running a race in earnest with a most beautiful cloak on, he will soon throw it off. Or if he has a belt round him full of gold, and must swim a river, he will throw it off first, otherwise it will drown him. But the way to get into positive liberty is to say, "I am crucified with Christ"; well, then, Christ does not care for gold or fine garments, or for anything else, they are not of any good to Him. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," that is to say, I died with Him and I am risen with Him, and then, He liveth in me; and to sum it all up we find, not Christ is all in all but "Christ is all, and in all." Christ is all objectively, and He is in all in living power.

427 Ques. Is not Joshua 4 the same thing as 2 Corinthians 4?

Very much so. There are the stones in the Jordan and the stones on the bank in Canaan. In Christ, I was once in Jordan, and that is all Jordan is worth in itself, but then, after all, I must carry it with me into Canaan, and bear about the dying of Jesus.

Ques. What is the meaning of Joshua setting up these stones?

He is always a figure of Christ leading us in the power of the Spirit, and these memorial-stones are a means of God to keep alive the truth in our souls.

Ques. Have the twelve stones in Jordan a deeper signification than those in Gilgal?

I think so; Gilgal is more the application of them. But even in heaven I do not lose sight of the fact of Christ having been in death; and here too, if I am going right, I never lose sight of the fact that He was down in the depths of death for me; so I bring it up with me, and carry it in my walk. And it is on the Canaan side I have this memorial that I went into death in order to reach there.

Ques. The power of death comes back again when the waters return?

Yes, and they become death for us now. The door is closed behind us.

Christ's death has closed all connection between us and the world, and this is amazingly important. Christ came into the world amongst men as the last possibility of hope as to God having anything to say to men; it was the last thing God had left, to try if He could re-awaken any response in man's heart towards Himself. Could He bring man's heart back to Himself? No, He could not. And God's work began where man's possibility ended. Christ was rejected and died, and now, in resurrection, He has left all other things on the other side of the water. It is really on the other side of the Red Sea, for we still have to go through the wilderness as a fact.

Ques. "Ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," what is this?

The celebration of that which our faith ought always to hold firm.

428 Ques. In verse 10, the priests stood still until everything was finished, does that give us any individual thought?

It is merely the passing of all Israel, the taking of them all into the new Canaan place. In figure, all the tribes were dead and risen, and a man out of each of the twelve tribes took a stone. While the Red Sea and Jordan coalesce, they are not the same; if they were only redemption, merely redemption, then I should be a person down here and in the world still. But the actual, practical, effect of crossing the Red Sea is to get into the wilderness - a trackless desert; if I cannot have a way in this world, I can have a way through it.

Ques. Did you say there was no "we" at the Red Sea?

No "with," because there was no Ark; it was a scene wholly between God and Christ.

Ques. Is, then, the Red Sea death as a fact in Christ?

Yes. But when they came out of the Red Sea, it was resurrection; on the cross Christ was totally alone.

Ques. From where, then, do we start on our wilderness journey?

Not from Canaan.

In Romans, there is no person risen with Christ. One there is alive from the dead, but no other is risen with Christ. When I come to "risen with Christ," I have God quickening a dead Man and me with Him, and then setting Him at His right hand. In Colossians, He has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses; but in coming down to my place in death, Christ has put all my sins away - the whole thing is clear. God has been glorified, and He takes both Christ and believers, and puts us together up there. Though not union itself, it is the next step to it. In Romans there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, but such, though alive, are not there said to be risen with Christ. Now, are we alive in this world? Then I ask, what are we going to do? Yield ourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead. And the wilderness then comes to prove such. True, we have tasted the grapes of Eshcol, but we are going through the world; when we are really in Canaan, grapes will be our portion.

Ques. If there was no Ark at the Red Sea, where, then, do we find the death of Christ there?

God's rod it was that smote the waters. He has delivered us by the death and resurrection of Christ, and not merely by the blood meeting His righteous claims - "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" - for they were still in Egypt, and there was no deliverance for them until they had crossed the Red Sea. But when they had crossed the sea, they were clearly no longer slaves, but fully redeemed out of their house of bondage. At the Red Sea, the great thing for us is that Christ was alone and we were not with Him. God was acting for the people at the Red Sea. It was the rod, i.e., judgment.

429 Ques. Do you say that Romans does not go further than giving life and justification?

I do; we are there looked at as men down here, actually alive in the world, and we are called upon to yield ourselves up to God.

Ques. Does not Romans 6:3 take in Jordan?

No, because there we are not risen with Christ. So when Canaan is referred to in Exodus 15, it is, "Thou shalt bring them in." The power of death, but as broken, is seen at Jordan, and there is baptism at the Red Sea, but not at Jordan. Notice also that in Romans 6 we are not baptised to our own death, but to Christ's death. And so at the Red Sea, it is Christ's death, not our death and resurrection with Him. Quite true it is that, in one aspect of the Red Sea, the whole thing is finished; for we find there the judgment of the wicked, the work of redemption, and the fact that we are brought to God - "brought you to myself" - and I do not know how anybody can go further than that. If I look at redemption, the whole thing is finished, but when I come to the experimental side of things, then I find something else, namely, Christ's death and coming up in resurrection. But even then I have not "with." So in Romans 5, "we also joy in God" as well as "have peace with God"; it is perfect present favour, and we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." But then, from the middle of Romans 5, comes another question which has to do with experience, not with forgiveness, nor with redemption and the like. It is now a question of the state and condition I am in, not that of judgment and redemption. And then I begin to talk about "I." I can, I cannot. And it is no longer, 'I have been redeemed,' but, 'I have died along with Christ.'

Ques. Would you not say that in Romans 6 we get into Jordan, but that we do not get out?

Well, in a sense, but that is a bad place to be in.

Ques. Does Romans 6:8, take us beyond death?

430 Yes.

Ques. Does not "reckon" carry us to Jordan?

No, not exactly. In Romans, the Christian is looked at as living in this world, only dead to sin - the evil nature judged, but the place not changed.

Ques. How far does Romans 8:1, go?

As far as "in Christ." But it is all negative there. We have been brought to God, and there is no condemnation at all, neither as regards the nature nor in respect of the guilt.

Ques. Is it not, then, a new state, "in Christ"?

It is in Christ, but the effect of this is death to the old state.

Ques. And Christ is our life?

Not looked at as beyond death, that would be resurrection. It is identification with Christ as to life, but not as to place. We have been brought out of Egypt and we are in the wilderness, a dry and thirsty land where no water is; that is where the Red Sea brings us. Accordingly we find there the manna, i.e., Christ suited to our being in this world looked at as a wilderness, and water also.

Ques. Is, then, Romans 8 entirely in the wilderness?

Yes, but it makes us look up. And while we are walking in this world, we want the Spirit of Christ. The possession of the Spirit is significant of the Christian position. In Romans 8 the Spirit is contrasted with the flesh.

Ques. If the Red Sea is only Christ's death and resurrection for us, not with us, would that make the world a wilderness to us?

Yes; the Holy Ghost dwells in us, and we are strangers in the world, delivered from the condition we were once in. At the Passover God was Judge; at the Red Sea, a Deliverer. And we are delivered without as yet being brought into our proper place, whilst the world becomes a desert to us. That which constitutes the Christian condition is the presence of the Holy Ghost. A Christian is known in virtue of his having the Holy Ghost. There may have been a previous work of grace in his soul, but he is not a Christian in proper Christian standing until he has received the Spirit. It is Christ in us, as distinguished from holiness of character. The prodigal was very sincere, but though he had repented, he was not fit to go into the house, he had not the best robe, he did not know his father, for he had not yet met his father. Salvation is a real thing, and it is only truly known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. People are often told to examine themselves to see whether they have it, but set a man to examine and see if he has eyes, he will never see them until he dies and has none. That is not Christian condition. Before the prodigal met his father, he was examining himself and saying, "make me as one of thy hired servants," and then when he did meet his father, he could not say so at all.

431 Ques. What is the difference between the terms, "old man," and "flesh"?

None, save that the one is old man, and the other is flesh. In Romans, the responsible man is seen in a new state; I quite admit that we find there the deliverance of the Red Sea, and also that we are brought to God which in that respect goes even further than Joshua.

Ques. What are the enemies dead?

It was the judgment of God upon all that was against the people; all that was gone for ever. But when we come to the actual condition of the people, then it is another thing. In the redemption at the Red Sea we see, in figure, the absolute place in which we are before God, viz., as fit before Him as ever we shall be in heaven. This does not give us exactly the whole of Romans, because the latter part of the epistle is experience. Jordan is a matter of fact, not of experience, although we have to learn it in our experience.

Ques. But have we not to grow?

Yes, but that is a distinct thing, it is not meetness. Hence the importance of seeing God's work clear and distinct. Jordan really has nothing to do with redemption, it has to do with my passing through a certain thing into heaven, or what is heavenly. We have also in Romans the certainty of God being for us, and of our being kept by Him. Yet it does not say, "whom he justified," them He also sanctified, but, "glorified." And then the apostle turns back, and says, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" In Exodus 15 we are brought to God; all is changed, but it is in order to our being with God, without raising the question as to whether we are in the world or not. And I do not weaken my place with God by bringing out, 'I must' this or that, before I clearly get where I am. It is quite right to insist upon practice, and upon experience too; but what we want to lay hold of, as against the whole religious world, is that we are with God according to the power of redemption without any question of our being in the desert or anything else in the world. And if we apprehend this clearly, we shall not fail to find that we are in the desert. We have, first, our redemption, an absolute redemption, but besides, God bringing us to Himself, and God going to bring us into a place which He has prepared for a habitation, and He dwelling in the midst. Then another thing, when I reach Canaan, I find the people of the land, instead of trembling, ready to fight with chariots

of iron. First, we must be clear in our souls that God has redeemed us, and brought us to Himself, and that there we are. And then we have a great deal to learn, and judge, and find out about ourselves; but He has redeemed us first; up to that point all our experiences were Egyptian, like those of the prodigal, as we were saying, before he met his father. And very useful these experiences are, too.

432 Ques. What did you say the holy habitation was?

God Himself.

Ques. Then is it an individual thing and not a place?

That is the very point. It is not Israel which is the habitation, but Thou hast brought us to Thy holy habitation. God has brought us to Himself, in this passage, not brought Himself to us. And as a consequence we have now to learn ourselves; God humbles us, and proves us, and so on, but all the while He takes care of the very nap of our coats. Well, if we have the consciousness that not only we are redeemed this way, but also that, as over Jordan, we are risen with Christ, then we are ready to be enlisted on God's behalf. Then, too, we find the other side of God's blessedness. Now it is, 'I have brought you into a certain place, not only to Myself.' But as soon as we are across the Red Sea, the whole experience in grace comes in - manna, the water at Rephidim, and conflict: manna came first, when they murmured and then got quails, too. God glorified Himself in thus giving them everything without reproach. But later on, twenty-five thousand from amongst the people died for asking for them. Moses, too, was shut out of the land.

Ques. When you speak of wilderness experiences, do you mean that God was proving them, and that they also were proving God?

Yes; in a certain sense both these things were true.

But from Sinai onwards, the character of God's dealings was different. God did not deal with them in government until they reached Sinai. After Sinai, God humbled them, and proved them, to know what was in their hearts. Before Sinai, He dealt with them according to His grace, not according to their responsibility.

433 In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul says that we shall all be manifested to God; but far from being uneasy about that, rather he says, I am always living as if the judgment-seat were there, i.e., for himself; whilst as for sinners, he adds, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." In a general sense, if we were all manifested to God, we should need no chastening. There might perhaps be some chastening for the purpose of shewing us something special, but I speak generally.

It is important for us to see what Scripture is at, and to learn to distinguish between our being brought to God by redemption, and our experiences, whether it be those of the desert or those of Canaan.

Ques. Are there, then, no experiences until after deliverance is known?

There were experiences before the Red Sea; they were thankful to hear that God had visited them, and they started, and then followed, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD ."

Ques. Is that Psalm 46?

The Psalms are all experience, but that particular one gives us the deliverance of the last days, and there the power of evil is found in another shape.

Ques. Then redemption takes us out of our former position, but leaves our condition as it was?

It may or it may not be so.

Ques. "Keep yourselves in the love of God," is that redemption?

No, though I may learn it in redemption.

Ques. Will you say a word about Amalek?

It is the power of Satan in their enemies. God swore He would have war with Amalek, and it would soon be finished if that were all, but it is in men, and so it is from generation to generation.

Ques. Why are the stones set up in Gilgal?

It is the death of Christ, but as associated with our new circumstances.

Ques. Is Amalek, Satan or the flesh?

434 Satan.

Ques. Why did the priests stand in the bed of the river all the time?

The power of Christ never ceases until all the people have passed Jordan.

Ques. Do you exclude the idea of the flesh from Amalek?

Well, I should.

Ques. What is Jericho?

It is the place where the curse was, and a sample, too, of Jehovah's power which set aside the whole power of the enemy by simply blowing rams' horns.

Ques. What of the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment?

That was merely the people gratifying their lust with the things of the world; and it was disobedience, too. In the desert there was no circumcision, for one must be in Canaan before one can circumcise.

Ques. Had they neglected it in Egypt?

No, they did circumcise there. Nor were they purged from their idols in Egypt. But we are told pretty much, in figure, what ought to be, very little of what was. If it is history, it is in the wilderness with no circumcision, and idolatry.

Ques. Ought they to have been circumcised?

I suppose so, but without talking about redemption, which is a distinct thing, they had not really given up Egypt. If I say I am dead, still God tests, and in a certain sense I am still looked at as in the world.

In the beginning of Hebrews 11 we find the two things distinct. Abel with his more excellent sacrifice, i.e., Christ, and the power of life in Enoch, and then Noah, warned of God, condemning the world. That was only the condemnation, not the carrying of it out, but the world condemned is a distinct thing. We have better things, but I only note the fact that this condemning the world is brought in here.

Ques. Was not Enoch out of the world?

No, it was not yet condemned. It is a great thing to take Christ's death, and to see in it the condemnation of the world. But though Christ's death has lifted us up out of it, He does not draw the Gentiles until He is out of the world. There was redemption in His death, and death to sin to all that was in it, but the condemnation of the world is another point.

The reproach of Egypt is not rolled away until we come to the circumcision of Christ.

435 Ques. It seems to be rather a reproach of the wilderness journey that they were circumcised in Egypt, and yet not in the wilderness?

But all this we get as figure. The testing of the state of the soul is neither redemption, nor is it the having done with the world - Egypt.

Ques. Would not circumcision have been out of place in the wilderness, for they should have gone straight into the land?

Well, no, I suppose it ought to have been observed. But when they were circumcised, then the manna ceased as it did not apply to that state. But if I am in Canaan it is another thing, for there I am connected with a heavenly Christ. Canaan and the wilderness are the two parts of Christian life.

Ques. Does manna ever cease for us?

Practically, yes. Here on earth I have, say, trouble in my family, and I ought to think about it; it is insensibility on my part if I do not, but that is down here, not in heavenly places. Thank God, He does think of us here in this world of sorrow, and trouble, and all manner of things that arise. I am thrown into circumstances that test my faith. But, in principle, Christ has gone through it all; He was tempted like as we are, except sin, and so I want Him now. But if I get into the third heavens, I do not want there a God that comforteth them that are cast down. There is a very distinct difference between our enjoying Christ where He is, and Christ comforting us down here. If a man marries, he shall have trouble in the flesh, though it is quite right for a man to marry. Still, we learn that Christ is suited to our need, and we prove the comfort of His love in the time of trouble; in such circumstances Christ is manna. As saints, we go through both experiences at the present time, though not at the same moment. If I have a sick wife, I ought to feel for her, such things are sure to come in; but suppose that this same sick wife and I enjoy together heavenly things in the heavenly places in Christ, then it is like having our feet together in Canaan; but there is also the testing and the trying for us in the desert, and we find a Christ that is able to succour us, and to feed our souls with grace sufficient made perfect in our weakness.

Ques. Is manna a humbled Christ?

436 Not exactly; it is Christ come down into my circumstances, and humbled therefore only in a certain way.

Ques. Why are the relationships belonging to this world brought out in Ephesians?

God always owns the relationships that He set up at the first, sin has ruined them and brought in trouble and sorrow, but in the beginning God made them male and female, and therefore they are all carefully maintained. We find these two things, first, what God set up in nature (and now also its ruin), and secondly, that man in Christ has gone into heaven; and He has sent down the Holy Ghost to associate us with Himself in heaven where earthly things have no place; but still God never disowns what He set up at the beginning. If a man has the Holy Ghost as Paul had, he says, I know no man after the flesh, but God still owns the other side. Of course, there are many exercises, but that which God set up in nature, He maintains in the fullest way. "Without natural affection," is a sign of the last days.

Ques. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," does not that apply in the wilderness?

Yes, to everything.

Ques. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh," what does that mean?

Just the fact. I do not meet a Christian merely in natural circumstances and associations, but as in the Spirit.

READING 3

Ques. Is this aspect of the Lord with the sword drawn a continuous one?

Yes, in Canaan.

Ques. Is He, then, always looked at as carrying on the warfare?

Yes, and if we have not Him, as well as God's armour, we shall not stand. Mark, the fighting is only when we get into Canaan, though the Amalekites are the same in principle.

Ques. At the restoration of the twelve tribes, will there be found any among them not true to the Lord?

No, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." There will be this difference, that the two tribes will be brought into the land as a whole, but in the case of the ten tribes, the rebels among them shall not enter the land.

437 Ques. Then whatever there may be of rebellion in the millennium, it will not be from the ten tribes?

No, it will not, i.e., not from among those brought in, but it might be from among those born afterwards. Those who are spared, the third part, who pass through the fire, will be all righteous. There will be rebellion by the Jews, because they have rejected Christ, and will be under antichrist; but the ten tribes had nothing to do with Christ, nor will they have anything to do with antichrist.

Ques. But during the millennium, the whole twelve tribes will be as one people, and it is said of them, "Thy people also shall be all righteous," Isaiah 60:21? Is this true of the ten tribes?

It may be so, for the rebels from among them will have been purged out. In Isaiah, we find the two grounds of God's controversy with them, and their rejection. In chapters 40-48 there is the idolatry question, and then, from that on to the end of chapter 57, it is the rejection of Christ with a testimony of blessing at the end. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," ends the section as to Christ. Chapter 60, where the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and so on, seems to be more general; the chapter relates to Jerusalem.

I suppose that here, and in Ezekiel 20, Jerusalem is taken as a centre, and then it includes all the land.

Ques. Why is it said, "this day," in Joshua 5:9?

Because He had said, circumcise them this day.

Ques. Circumcision as a rule was on the eighth day, and now in the land, they have got into their eighth day and there seems power with that, and then they go on?

Yes.

Ques. Is the general thought of Canaan that of the heavenly places?

Yes, I have no doubt of it.

Ques. Does the "reproach" refer to the bondage?

It is the whole thing, the bondage of the flesh - the body of the flesh. Satan is the head of the world, the essence of which is the flesh.

Ques. And circumcision is the putting off the body of the flesh?

Yes, in Colossians.

438 Ques. What is the difference between our circumcision in Christ, and Israel's future circumcision in the land?

I do not think they will be circumcised in our way at all; though they will get the fruit of Christ's resurrection, it will not be in a dead and risen way, but as alive here on the earth.

Ques. The sure mercies of David, is that Israel's hope founded on resurrection?

A dead David can give them nothing; it is really Christ.

Ques. Does not the apostle give us the moral power of circumcision in the end of Romans 2?

Yes, it is not outward in the flesh.

Ques. "Putting off of the body of the flesh," is that for us, or by us?

It is for us in one sense, but it is realised by faith. You must ask J.B.S.

What do you say to that, J.B.S.?

J.B.S. It cannot be realised at all until you have got a heavenly footing.

Ques. Is not circumcision in Romans more what is for us, because it is in heart and spirit?

Yes. I was thinking of the "putting off" in Colossians.

Ques. "Without hands"?

Yes, it is not the mere Jewish thing. Colossians brings in faith, too, "faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In Colossians it is, I think, more as to standing. Colossians shews two distinct things, a living man that has died, and a dead man that is raised - not a living man that is raised. The fact is of course seen in Christ. But resurrection, or rather, quickening, is not connected with dying and rising, the quickened person is the person who was dead; but in the other case, he has to die to the whole condition and rise again, or else he would be out and out dead; and that carries a great deal with it. But that is the fact as to Scripture. But I wanted to know, J.B.S., what you were saying about being past Jordan?

J.B.S. A soul that has passed Romans 7 cannot happily go out to the world, and yet there is no notion of being done with the world. In Romans 6, it is only sin and sins, it is not a question of the world at all.

That is perfectly true. Romans 6 only deals subjectively with state, but there being no resurrection there, I have not got into the new concern at all.

439 J.B.S. If a man gets into the new thing, it is much more difficult for him to give up prospects than possessions.

Because possessions never satisfy?

J.B.S. Plenty have boldness to enter in, in Hebrews, but they have not closed the door on the world.

Romans 6 deals only with myself, for I believe Romans means to keep us down here in this world, not to have our hearts in it, but still down here. It does look at us as "in Christ," but there that has nothing to do with heaven. All we find in Romans by being in Christ is, "no condemnation."

Ques. Then the thought of being in Christ, is not Christ in heaven, but only in Christ as in headship of a new race?

Yes.

J.B.S. A person will often say, 'I stick only to Christ,' but it is not Christ in heaven that they have.

Colossians does not, I think, take us into heaven, except in hope, only that we have life there, and our life is hid with Christ in God. The moment we are in heavenly places, the question is raised as to 'for' or 'against,' and it is a drawn sword; it may be very trying and painful, but directly we come up to a certain point, there arises opposition, 'you must not touch that ground.' It is, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Directly we come to a rejected Christ, it is "with" or, "against."

Ques. The failure of Moses to circumcise his child before going into Pharaoh's presence - what would that shew?

That I cannot go and deal with the deliverance of God's people out of the world, if I have not accepted death for myself to start with. It was before the law, and not by it, that they had circumcision, and where there is the promise of grace and blessing, this we can only receive through death and circumcision.

Ques. We must be there and know where we are, otherwise there can be no conflict with the people that are there?

I believe that we may get flesh tested usefully, and we learn it by experience, though that is not reckoning ourselves dead. But when we have passed over and reached the heavenly places, that is to say, when we are sitting there in Christ, as in Ephesians, then, and then only, do we get the armour. It is a totally distinct thing; it is not the Red Sea, nor the wilderness, nor anything of that kind, though in one sense we ate always in the latter, but, looked at as a distinction of condition, we are past it. It is not a man dying who was once alive in sin, "in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them"; but it is, "when we were dead in sins." Ephesians begins with a Christ raised out from among the dead and not known upon earth at all, and that is why the apostle says that he does not know Christ after the flesh, even though he had known Him thus. We have the full purpose of God in Ephesians, but when we come to fact, there is only one fact, and that is that Christ, when dead, was raised and set at God's right hand. We do not find in Ephesians a living Christ in the world. Death annulled the whole previous existence and I do not say, I must die to all this, but, dead, I have been quickened. And as to my place, I have a place in heaven where the devil cannot come, though as a general thought it is the very place where the devil is, and in that governmental heavenly place, there he is, and so I have to put on my armour and fight. But to quicken a dead man is a distinct thing from making a living man die. Colossians may shew us that aspect of Christ during the forty days before His ascension, though it gives more - the life hid with Christ in God. It gives us, "risen with him," and Christ is our life, but death has closed the world. In Himself, Christ was always a heavenly Person, but He was out of heaven and death had come in, and if I try to go back, I cannot go beyond death. Romans carefully avoids resurrection; it says, "We shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." And "alive," also, we have there. This is important for us, for as a matter of fact we are not looked at as risen in Romans: I reckon myself dead, but not risen.

440 Ques. Does not Colossians, then, enter into the land at all?

No. We do not find even the rapture in Colossians; "your life is hid," and "ye are dead," that is settled; and we do not belong to this world. I am not going to have my heart developed here, on the contrary, my hope is laid up there; and when Christ shall appear, I shall have the glory. I may have eaten the specimen grapes of Eshcol, and pomegranates, and found them very good, but if we are risen with Christ, it does not say, 'ye have entered in,' but, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth," for there is the Head. And it argues, "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments [principles] of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." That is Puseyism and all such things as people in the flesh bowing their heads like bulrushes, etc.

441 Ques. Is that the reason we have not the devil in Colossians?

Nor have we the Holy Ghost. But our affections are to be set there in heaven; our connections are all there, and our life is there, though we have not yet entered in ourselves.

Ques. Romans 6 seems to carry us to another place?

It is subjective only as to what we are. We do find there, "crucified with him," and that I am to reckon myself to be dead, and alive to God, but not the new place.

Ques. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him," 2 Tim. 2:11?

That is Paul's specific doctrine; it is Romans, and in measure Colossians, but not Ephesians. Romans gives us the fundamental condition of a soul with God - 'I am saved absolutely' - but not a trace of the mystery.

Ques. And I cannot live as I like?

No, not if you are dead. In 2 Timothy it is, "live with him" and "reign with him," but there is no entrance into heaven.

Ques. What is "the power of his resurrection" in Philippians?

There it is, first, "that I may be found in him," i.e., I want to know my righteousness with God, and next, that I may act and walk through this world in the power of resurrection which makes death and all things else nothing to me.

Ques. What is, "we are the circumcision"?

Dead to sin, morally.

Ques. Does the drawn sword mean the word of God?

Well, it is by the word, but the point here is that the moment we reach the heavenly places we must fight.

Ques. "Mortify therefore," is that Gilgal?

Yes.

Ques. Could anyone get to Gilgal without being in the land?

No.

Ques. If a Christian is walking badly, you would not say to him, "put off"?

No, we never find in Scripture, 'you must put off,' or 'you must die to sin,' though I have to live as a risen man down here. Let us not confuse "mortify" with the "sword drawn." When we draw the sword, we take Ephesian ground, and we must not put Ephesians in between Colossians 2 and 3. Mortify! Do I mortify anything in heaven? No; in Colossians we are on earth, not in heaven, and we mortify "members" on earth.

442 Ques. But is not Joshua 5 to prepare us to come out in chapter 6?

Quite so.

And then we wrestle, not like Joshua, with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in the heavenly places; there only is it that we get into this kind of warfare. In Colossians, I have to mortify my members as the fullest development of divine life.

Ques. But if I am not mortifying my members down here, can I, practically, fight in the heavenly places?

No, you will not be in a condition to fight.

Ques. Must a soul go through the different steps in Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians?

Yes, I believe so, but in Ephesians I learn better than ever what Romans is.

Ques. The difficulty is that Gilgal is in the land?

Though we do not get the Holy Ghost in Colossians, and we cannot do anything without having the Holy Ghost, yet that is not what is unfolded in this epistle. We learn more by putting things together as Scripture gives them than by any arranging of them ourselves, for we are such poor finite creatures. Only we cannot put all truths together. Are you in the heavenlies or on earth? You say, 'in heavenly places, and sitting there'; then I ask, why have you got such a dreadful cold in your head? People do not have colds in heavenly places. Christians are viewed both as in the heavenlies and on earth, but we cannot look at them in both places at the same instant. Our faith is tested and exercised as to how far we are living there, when we are not there. In Ephesians, we have the whole thing complete, as it is in God's counsels.

Ques. Can one be over Jordan without being in heavenly places?

You mean, are we in Colossians or in Ephesians, but that is putting things together which Scripture keeps distinct.

Ques. Why have we the warnings against sin in Ephesians?

Because nothing is so opposite to sin as sitting in the heavenly places. Absolute contrast is what characterises Ephesians, the strongest possible contrasts will be found there. It is not so in Colossians, because there we have life and that life largely developed, and the Holy Ghost not alluded to. Ephesians opens with God's sovereignty, God's counsels, and it has nothing to do with the world. Suppose God came and chose us out of London now, it would be just as absolute sovereignty as if it were before the world was. But it is "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," that is God's nature; and we are in His presence with His nature so that we should enjoy Him perfectly. Moreover, He must have sons there; He would have, not holy servants merely, but sons. That is what Christ was, holy, blameless; and He was a Son, and that is just what God counsels for us. Let us then take care that the flesh, which is still in us, does not shew itself. But in Colossians it is not that; there we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," but in Ephesians, the new man after God "is created in righteousness and true holiness." In Colossians, we are not brought into the heavenly places completely, but it is in knowledge. Union, in a certain sense, is assumed in Colossians. I am not a Christian at all if I have not the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost acts in me to make me know the perfectness of what Christ has done.

443 And then we have to contend with Satan's power in that which God has given to us, and so the sword comes in. As to the warfare, it is given more in detail in Ephesians. It is not lusts merely that Ephesians touches upon; when it comes to lusts, if we have not Christ we are captive in Egypt. But in Ephesians Paul first shews where we are according to God's purpose, and then, as a supplementary thing, he speaks of Christ's love to the Church which He will present to Himself in glory and of the warfare we must wage until we get to that place.

Ques. Does the prayer in chapter 1 refer to our standing, and that of chapter 3 more to our state?

The first prayer is to God, and the second is to the Father. Just as we have, "holy and without blame" before God, and, "predestinated as unto the adoption" as with the Father. But the prayer in chapter 1 is not that they should obtain anything, but that, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know and realise the hope of God's calling as an object before them. Then the other part of the prayer is that they might know the same power that had raised Christ from among the dead, and so on. In chapter 3 we have, not exactly God's mind, but Paul's dispensation of it, and he prays, not that they may see the things, but that, as a fact, they may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, and

also that they may realise His presence until they are actually sitting with Him. Until then, Christ is the centre who fills all things. And as He dwells in my heart, I realise that I too am in the centre of it all. The apostle prays that we may know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. But besides that, we are at home in it all as we know His love that passeth knowledge. In the first prayer, Christ is seen raised up as Man; in the second, He is dwelling in our hearts by faith; then again, He is seen as filling all in all - "He . . . ascended . . . that he might fill all things" - but He dwells in us; and He is looking that this may be realised by us. But if we get into these heavenly places, we must have a sword.

444 Ques. Is "the LORD'S host" Israel?

Yes, Israel, not angels.

Ques. "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot"?

That is another important principle. God is as holy in warfare as He is in redemption. His holiness was proved on the cross: "It became him, . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"; it became God to do so. And He is just as holy in the warfare. Joshua has here to take off his shoe just as Moses had to do at the bush. We do have the Lord with us, but to have Him we must be holy.

Ques. Is the Angel, then, Jehovah?

Always.

Ques. Is this the fulfilment of God's promise in Exodus 23? Yes, only it is fuller still.

Ques. What answers now to the Captain of the Lord's host?

Christ in the power of the Spirit. It is not like Moses, a kingly governor under the law. Christ has gone down below the creature, i.e., into death and the grave, and He has gone up far above all things. And then He gives. All our gifts come from His taking such a place. Ministry is founded on Christ having overcome Satan, and Christ filling all things. These two things are the foundations of ministry. He led captivity captive, and He gave gifts. The power of evil has been beaten, and the whole scene is filled with the glory of Christ. This makes ministry such a wonderful thing. Christ has destroyed Satan's power at the cross, and He has given gifts to those He has delivered out of his captivity. He has given to us to overcome him, too. Having gone into the lower parts of the earth, and having been carried far above all heavens, He fills all things, and He gives gifts. We see thus that everything in our service must be suitable to the holiness of God or it will be bad service.

445 Ques. You would not confine conflict to ministry?

No; giving a cup of cold water is ministry. In this country, we know very little of conflict in an outward way; though it is found in families, if not in open persecution.

Ques. Would you say that the dispensation of the present time is that of the power of the Spirit of God?

Yes, that is what it is.

That which characterises our condition down here is that Satan is here, but the presence of the Holy Ghost makes me the servant, not exactly of the Holy Ghost, but of Christ, and the distribution of the gifts

makes anyone a servant of Christ in that particular gift. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came to witness that in consequence of redemption man in Christ has gone into the glory of God. Nowadays, men look for religious liberty, but in the time of the Acts they were thankful to suffer shame for His name's sake. The world is always stronger on its own ground than Christians are; when Moses killed the Egyptian, he ran away from Pharaoh.

Ques. A great deal of this conflict is carried on now on our knees, is it not?

I believe it is. Prayer is before the ministry of the word. And before ever they went into conflict, they ate the old corn of the land.

Ques. Has this anything to do with preaching the gospel?

When I meet sinners, I find man is upon a different ground altogether; and brethren have to watch about this, for they are apt to bring in heavenly things to people who need to know that they are guilty sinners. But if I deal with a sinner, I deal with him on that ground alone, i.e., as a responsible man; and I ask him, has not your conscience condemned you for that? Do you love your neighbour as yourself? Were you as sorry when your neighbour lost his fortune, as when you lost your own? The evangelist, as such, has nothing to do with heavenly places; an evangelist is blessed just as he deals with a man plainly on the ground of his responsibility - you have killed the Prince of Life. But in Joshua I have a man on totally different ground. Still, in either case, whether teaching or evangelising, the word of God is the power.

446 Ques. But now people know so much of the word of God, it is familiar to them?

Yes, there are plenty of hindrances. I remember a brother speaking to a fellow-traveller, who answered him, 'Oh, I am quite sure that the pure in heart will see God.' Well, he replied, do you think you are pure enough in heart to see God? 'Oh, you are beginning to be personal,' said he.

The tendency of the heavenly things, when we are full of them, is to take our minds away from the desperate necessities of sinners. All the preachings in Scripture are uncommonly personal. We must, of course, preach the grace that saves. But when we are in Ephesians I say good-bye to evangelising. If I were to go to heathen, I could tell them that God's Son has come into this world, and He has died, and He has been raised again; but if I were to say that in any of the so-called churches, they would reply, 'We all believe that, and have done so a long while since,' for all around us there is a popular knowledge of the facts of the gospel. But I preach to people that they are guilty, and not that they are lost. 'Lost,' is immensely important in teaching, but if we go and preach that, a man may say, 'lost! then there is an end of it.' When I look at the prodigal, and at his conduct in leaving his father's house, going away, doing his own will, and getting into such wretchedness and ruin - all is wrong, but there is nothing in that about his being dead in trespasses and sins. The jailer had the conviction that he needed to be saved; he knew that he was lost, in that sense, for God had dealt with his conscience. If I were to say to men, 'you are poor lost sinners,' they would know I meant that they will never be right with God if they do not repent, and so on.

Ques. Would you preach to a sinner that he is lost on account of his guilt, rather than for his nature?

Yes, just so. It is useful to shew sinners the root, if we put it straight before them, but not by saying, 'you have no power and you cannot come.' When I was converted, the quarrel about Calvinism was pretty strong, but I said to myself, 'How came I to be brought out, and all my companions left where they were?'

Ques. Where should the evangelist lead the sinner?

I should say he should lead him to God. It is true I am a member of Christ's body, but if I preach as an evangelist, I act in my gift, and I do not talk to a sinner about the one body; I look for the state of the soul I am speaking to; if he is converted but wants peace, I speak of that, and God gives wisdom in that way. If we only act in dependence, a person will be brought to those who will bring the thing home to him. At first there was a plain centre to take souls to, but now it is not so. But if all were in order, one could not separate the two things.

447 Ques. Could a sinner be convicted of guilt apart from the actual word?

No, though that depends a little on what you mean by the word.

Ques. Could one be convicted by means of a dream?

Yes, he could. Probably a third of the poor people of England are converted through dreams. God in His mercy has spread a kind of general knowledge about heaven, and about hell, and about Christ, and this He uses in His own way; but a man is not converted by anything that is not of God, and all that we have of God is in the word. And the things that are in the word we must have, or it is not of God at all. Only, if people lean on their dreams they never get on. A man in Yorkshire went to a wake to play skittles and drink and all that kind of thing; and he said to himself, 'I am going to hell, and all the people here are going to hell as fast as ever they can.' His wife came to look for him, and he went off with her, and for a whole fortnight he was in perfect misery, but afterwards he said, 'I went to God, and God sent me to Christ, and I got quite happy.' The clergyman came and asked him why he went about to hear all sorts of people, telling him he ought to listen only to a regularly ordained man. 'Well,' said he, 'that is just what I have done; I went to Christ, and is not He a regularly ordained man?' One left the church not long ago who told me he was converted by preaching one of his own sermons in a dream.

Well now, God's power was the whole thing; they might blow the ram's horns, but the walls fell down of God and Rahab was saved. Then a curse was put upon that which God had rejected and judged, and Jericho was not to be rebuilt. It was simply divine power which knocked all down. This is an immense principle.

Next, Achan takes of the accursed thing, and inasmuch as the Angel of His presence was as holy in warfare as in redemption, if they did anything inconsistent with that, the Lord would not go out with them. The mischief was that success had given them confidence, and this is always a snare; they say, Ai is a little city, it is not worth while for all of us to go up, a few is enough. And they are beaten.

448 Ques. What does the going round Jericho signify, as regards the character of testimony for the present day?

It is merely testimony, and that God will act; they do not touch anything, but the blowing of the trumpets brings God in, and He does the work. Now we have God's power, but if there is anything unsuited to God, He will not go out with us. After such a failure, there was, as there always is, a great deal more trouble than ever. All the people have to go up, an ambush has to be laid, and it is a regular business to overcome Ai.

If we use means and depend on them, we are not trusting God's power.

Ques. Why did Joshua stretch out his hand?

Ques. And the hands of Moses were held up in Exodus 17?

All that we may see is man's activity, but the real work is carried on by God. Down in the plain, Moses had to say to Israel, "Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you," but, on the other hand, Balaam says of them, speaking for God, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

Ques. Do we learn anything from Joshua's hand not getting weary as Moses' did?

It may be that Aaron and Hur, i.e., intercession and purity, kept God in blessing; Joshua represented the Lord Himself, there was therefore no failure, he kept his hand outstretched in God's power.

Ques. Where are we to draw the line in the use of means?

Where the Lord draws it. I went about for years with P.H., and he printed handbills, but I never did. I would rather have five people in earnest than five hundred gathered out of curiosity. God may gather people either way, for He is sovereign. If we have five people, and look to the Lord and trust Him, these may all be evangelists next week. I dread getting merely into human means. And I do not want fanaticism either, because then you might say, 'hold your tongue entirely, and the Lord can do what He pleases.'

449 Ques. If brethren have a place in a town, would you take another room to get people?

Some people like to be out and I like to be in. Leave liberty in these things; for myself, I like to identify the work with the meeting. I would rather have it connected with the centre; there is such a thing as a sound mind in judgment under God, but that is a very different thing from using weapons of warfare that are carnal. If Christ is our object, God will guide us.

Well, Ai is a very solemn lesson for us, and we have to learn it with God, so as to get back to the point where we started wrong. Remember, there is no difference between little and great with God. He takes care of a sparrow that falls, and He will burn up the earth. The question is as to what is right in His sight. So, at Ai, it was not merely a matter of power, but of judging evil. And where evil is not judged God will not use power. Joshua was terrified with the adversaries, but the Lord's answer to him was very simple, "Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?"

Ques. Ought not Joshua to have been conscious that Achan had sinned?

They could not have told perhaps that it was Achan, but if they had consulted God, He might have refused to answer, just as with Saul when in His own way He made them find out that Jonathan had tasted the honey. So if an assembly is spiritual, they will be conscious of anything that is grieving to the Spirit. And if they are not, this will not be the case, for they are then morally at the level of the sin committed. But if spiritually minded, they will be sensible of something wrong, and they will be looking to the Lord to bring the thing out.

Ques. Then does individual sin involve the whole assembly?

Where it is such that the assembly ought to take notice of it. But I believe things are more difficult to trace now because of the confusion. Still, where there is fidelity, there is power. If we hear that twenty-five Christians are put on the top of a rock to be dashed down, and only one of them gives way, but the remaining twenty-four are dashed down, we shall get the blessing of it; there cannot be power in any one

place without its telling on those in other places.

Ques. Suppose the case of an assembly where not positive sin but weakness is manifested, and not going on with God, what is to be done?

450 Pastoral care must come in, and they must humble themselves before God.

Ques. Is it right to confine humiliation to a few gathered together?

If it is only they who have it in their hearts.

Ques. Rather than involve the whole assembly?

Some may not feel the condition, but others do; though it is very happy if all in the assembly can.

Ques. But should they not all ask for light on the matter?

If they all agree, let them ask, but if they cannot agree, they cannot all ask.

Ques. How far should an assembly be humbled about evil in a person who has left it?

Until he has left, they are more or less concerned in it, and we ought to feel as Christ feels about evil.

Ques. But if a person has deliberately gone out, having done something very bad, what should the assembly do?

They should say so; he has gone out under a charge of sin, and he cannot come back until he gets leave to come back.

Ques. But if it is a known flagrant sin?

Very well, if a man commit forgery, and he goes out and says to the world, I have left those people, his flagrant sin being known, the assembly can say, he is gone away from us until he is permitted to come back.

Ques. Ought they not formally to put him away?

It says, "Put away from among yourselves," but if you say he has gone, he is not among yourselves. You can say sometimes that a person has withdrawn and cannot come back. The action of the assembly cannot take place after he has gone. I should say, he has left under such a charge and cannot come back until it is cleared up. Remember, 'putting out' is a judicial thing. And there is another thing, I turn away from certain persons.

Ques. If you act and put any out, you bind on them their sins, but if they left, and you close the door, is that binding their sins upon them?

So far it is.

Ques. If one leave, and it is found that he held bad doctrine, is the assembly involved in that doctrine?

If he held it while inside, they are concerned in it.

Ques. Ought the assembly to act in such a case and take any step about it?

451 Yes.

Ques. But there is difference between actual public withdrawal, and a person saying, 'I will not break bread with you'?

Well, you must try and ascertain the true state of the case.

Ques. But it is most important to make the act of breaking bread the public expression of fellowship?

Yes, it is. But if one be absent, I must see if it be carelessness, or if it be deliberate; if it be that continued, he must be put out.

Ques. But there is no thought in Scripture of anyone withdrawing?

Yes there is, there is apostasy.

Ques. But would real love to the brethren allow [this]?

If I love the children for the Father's sake, I do not go with them in things they may do against the Father.

Ques. When sin has come in anywhere, how far does responsibility rest on others around to help an assembly?

If they seek it, the Lord will shew how, the circumstances vary so greatly.

Ques. If you felt that the meeting had really gone wrong, could you stay in it?

I would never leave an assembly as such, unless I could say when I had left, that it was not God's assembly* at all. But Paul stayed away from Corinth, though he never actually broke with Corinth.

{*Note - That is to say, not a gathering of saints walking in the light of the Church, and that God can therefore own as such. See as to this, "Letters of J.N.D." Vol. 3, page 49.}

Ques. But he sent Timothy?

Yes, with a letter to recall them to obedience.

Ques. Suppose I go to a fresh place where there is a meeting, and as soon as I get there, I begin to do mischief and to use my gift for the purpose of gathering people to my ministry; and then, when I am asked to meet others, I refuse; what is to be done?

The great thing is to arouse the conscience of an assembly, and not to settle things for them. I could say to such an one, 'you are causing divisions, and I shall give you the cold shoulder,' as they say, and I should go on myself with those who are going on rightly.

Ques. And if he leave the meeting?

That is another thing, as we have seen already. But let patience have her perfect work, and that is very hard work sometimes. 'Unanimity' and 'voices,' I know nothing about. 'Unanimity' is merely a human judgment.

452 Ques. Suppose one had gone along with the man at Corinth?

Paul would have dealt with him as with the man in his wickedness. Only, when cases are not clear, you must wait on the Lord.

Ques. What is the Scripture for barring the door?

"Put away from among yourselves"; only, if he has gone out, you cannot put out one who is out, but the one Scripture applies to the two cases.

Then comes Gibeon; here it was a sin which remained among them. Israel took of their victuals; that was a human estimate of the thing.

Ques. Would this be one of the wiles of the devil?

Yes, it might seem a very nice thing to get a great and powerful city to help them, but it was using human means.

Ques. But the Gibeonites were wise in their way?

Yes; "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/readings-on-joshua-2/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net