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Substance of Sermons preached by our Pastor

on Sunday, September 15, 1974.

Morning Lesson. Genesis 22. vv. 1-19.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened, And it came to pass, that, while they ~~reasoned together~~ communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. Luke 24. vv. 13-15.

The blessed subject matter with us for this Day relates to the first Easter Day and the glorious lustre of Easter Day surrounds the whole subject, although for just a few hours the two who were walking in the late afternoon to a village seven miles from Jerusalem were ignorant of the glorious fact that Christ was risen, and that it was Jesus Himself who had drawn near and was speaking with them.

I feel it might be proper for me to advise you in advance as to the word that entered my spirit and my attention was focussed on. It is the blessed consummation of the subject when Jesus made as if He would go further, and they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." Quite clearly they were solicitous for Christ, - "Abide with us: for it is toward evening." Undoubtedly there is a beautiful application of the word in the souls of the Lord's dear people here below, especially to those advancing in years. You have surely come to a time, - and any who have known the visitation of Christ to their souls will make this appeal of love to Him; "Abide with us; stay with us. Do not prove to be a 'hasty guest, who tarries but a day'. Come into my breast; abide with me." And there is a prospect. It is toward evening. Shadows of the evening steal across the sky in my life. I shall soon come to the house that is appointed for all living, when the mourners go about the streets. The little day of life is far spent. As I look at you dear people in the pews and think of my own case as associated with you for many years, I can say the day is far spent and it has been a short day.

So this is the focal point which, as I trust, we shall approach in our meditation on this sacred Day. "Abide with us," and He was constrained. It is not for me to say much about it: the miracle is, it is His divine method with all His people. Do you see in the teaching and leading of the Spirit, God does not exercise the sheer weight of His omnipotence to force an issue? He does with the ungodly: not with His dear saints. He uses the powerful efficacy and constraining influence of His love, grace, of the fear of God, of His presence. People who love the Lord are constrained. All they are constrained in and constrained to do bears the imprint of His seal. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

I must allow myself to speak spontaneously, and I will drop in a word. If you are deeply exercised in a matter, never try to force the issue. You may even mention a living exercise to another and find as yet the door is closed. Never try to force it: go on praying, pleading, knocking, seeking the Lord. At the right time, hour, split second,- did I say? It is true: the preacher has reason for saying it. At the right moment you will find the door wide open. The Lord makes willing. The Lord constrains you, and causes the deed to be done. It is like a beautiful flower, with all its lustre and fragrancy. If you put your hand to it you will have a dismal failure, shame and confusion. Let God do His work. He will do it. Never mind opposition or barriers. God soon brings a poor proud heart down. He can do it in a moment; the stoutest rebel must resign. He will do it, and He constrains. It is not for me to refer to, but I should never have come to the Dicker and this pulpit apart from the constraining power of the Lord many years ago. On the island platform at Polegate the Lord constrained me. Man had nothing to do with it. That is why I have continued. It is not my natural choice. The Lord constrains people. Men and women are brought together in holy matrimony: It is the constraining influence of the Lord accomplishes it, because you felt unwilling. It is the same in providence. There is a path you object to; a door, a road you have no intention of pursuing, yet it is the Lord's way and you are constrained. It is sweet mercy to look back on. You are a Sunday School teacher and you did not want to be; you felt no ability to teach a class, and the Lord constrained you. I do not know what;- in anything you name, if you have the principle of grace the Lord

has constrained you: it is the will of God. Paul knew it well when he said; "called according to his purpose; not mine; God's." So pray for the rich, constraining influence of the power of God, and in certain categories this is even used by God;- a compelling influence in the minds of people of the realm,- kings and people in the world. They may take a course opposite to all their projects. They do things for the people of God and they do not know why they are doing them. They have no idea other than they recognise there must be a supernatural power.

A remarkable thing is, just as the Lord constrains you, you may constrain Him. You have power to constrain Jesus, Did you know it? to influence Jesus Christ. You are coming back to me and saying; "What power? The power of the Spirit in faith and love. If the blessed Spirit bestows on us as here, sweet graces in exercise, you have power to constrain Jesus. It is a wonderful thing, when He made as though He would go further they had power by the Spirit to constrain Him. He could not escape that power: He could not turn Himself from the power that constrained Him. You contemplate: if the Lord gives you power to constrain Him we should have a blessed net result, because if you have constrained Him by the Spirit of love and faith, you have brought Him in your heart with you to the Sanctuary. I mentioned to the dear friends at Brixton on Friday concerning the new temple: when the day comes to move into it may the friends prove they have taken Christ with them. That is the secret. If you constrain Him you take Christ with you. It is a blessed visitation when a person brings the Saviour in their heart, whether they come in the front or the back door, it does not matter so long as they bring Christ with them. People do not realise the importance of this as they should. They think man can do everything. You want to think of the counterpart: whether you bring Him when you come to your pew.

They constrained Him: they wanted Him to abide, There is a goal, an objective, but you have got to reach it and tread the path to it. That is why I felt to bring this before you the first part of this morning. You do not get through all at once. In any case I should miss out <sup>the</sup> cases of some if I left this out. I want to find you, and show you where you are going, and the riches and beauty and splendour at the end of the road,- the amber, as dear Mrs Ethel Field had.

So let us apply ourselves by the grace of God, to the first part of the

subject. What happened? The two disciples, the dear women, all the Lord's disciples had known, (and this connects with last Sunday) the fulfilment of what the blessed Lord had told them. He was going to Jerusalem to be crucified and slain, and Peter had said; "This shall not be unto thee... Pity Thyself, Lord." The biggest shaft the devil uses is that. "You do not want to think about tribulation, or suffering, of the cross. Get away from it. Have an easy life; enjoy yourself." If you save your life, (this is pitying yourself) you will lose it. We see how Peter came to know this glorious truth in his first sermon. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." If I give you a title this morning for the whole subject, it is, The Process of Spiritual Life. It is a process: you go on; you learn more. There are further revelations: there is deeper teaching. It is the process of life, and it must go on for ever. I believe in glory itself, as in the Revelation,- He 'shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.' It will take eternity to explore the depths and to see more of them.

Take the process of spiritual life. The disciples,- the two here and the godly women, had known what they viewed as the terrible terminal tragedy of the crucifixion of the Lord. He was dead: the King was dead. The voice of the rulers of the Jews and the multitudes had prevailed. Pontius Pilate gave the word though he was unwilling. He was crucified, and the King was dead.... Your salvation is pendant on this, and your path will be in conformity to it. You will walk it in your religion, with your hopes and promises. Then it seems as though the King is dead. None can evaluate as to their deep spiritual emotion. The King was in the sepulchre, and all of His Kingdom with Him. His people were; all the promises were. I do not think when you come to this path you have the slightest understanding of what is happening to you. It is a profound enigma and mystery. You have no idea of what it means, child of God. You will walk it.

The King was dead. So with that as foundation and background you will see the effect produced in the spirits of the disciples. What I want to say now is, we will trace out and view the wonders of the special gift and donation of the Lord to His disciples,- the graces of the Spirit, and

in particular the trio,- faith, hope, love. I know you heard it from my lips on Easter Day, but I will say this: it is always a thing that appeals to and attracts me; namely, after His death no enemies hand ever touched Him. This is a beautiful truth to me. It was a thing of the past, According to our understanding after His resurrection no enemy saw Him; only loved ones. No more brutality; no more hostile hands: the malice of His enemies was past. From the time of His voluntary death only loving hands carressed Him. Loving hands took His precious body from the cross,- the rugged wood of Calvary. They wound the precious body in grave clothes with the spices and laid Him in the sepulchre;- loving hands. I wonder if you feel your hand reaching forth? How would you have been, a saved sinner, ransomed from death; what hands would have been reaching forth to touch His dear body? O how wondrous this is!

So you may see something of your own case and how it will be, and also realise a little of the wondrous lustre of the resurrection in your soul. I will come in here to say to you, apart from the time when you will yield your spirit willingly to Christ, in your life and after trials you will also know times when you feel a divine, celestial, supernatural, ethereal influence absolutely enshrouding you, and everything is different. The misery of life is gone. The sorrow, distress, agony of life is gone, and it is as if you are just outside heaven, and such glorious efficacy. It is the power of His resurrection,- sweet singing, heavenly music, the melody of heaven: beautiful, glorious, wonderful song, and you say it must be a foretaste,- cheerful, joyful hope, and glorious expectation.

On the third day He rose. No one saw Him rise: they saw Him risen. No one saw Him rise: they saw Him immediately He was risen. He first appeared to Mary Magdalene. It was a wonderful word when He said to her; "Mary", because no one else could pronounce it as He did. Jesus had a way of saying it. No one else could say it in the same way. "Master; Rabboni" She was going to fling her arms round Him. "Touch me not." Do you know the pure love of the Spirit? the charms of His mind?-The women named in the chapter were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and they came to the sepulchre, and "behold two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." They were taking these words back

to the apostles,- and think of the tragedy of unbelief. It is a thing that has stung you almost to death. You hardly rise out of unbelief. It has held you in a cell for perhaps ten years. Will you ever get out? You cannot believe. It is quite obvious if you never get out of it, if the Lord never blesses you with faith, there is no hope whatever.. Faith is God's instrument to salvation. By this we believe to the saving of our souls. So what a tragedy is unbelief! When the dear women brought the message "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." They needed the word Christ spoke to the two, and it was His prerogative to use it. "O fools," No one has a right to use it to another person. It is solemn: if you use it to your fellow creatures you are in danger. It was the Lord's prerogative to say it. "O foolish ones." It belongs to us, and the Lord will say it to you. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

"Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." It is clear this must have been in the afternoon of the resurrection day, and as the two approached Emmaus, a distance of seven miles, it was towards evening. Thus the two set out to walk seven miles. "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three-score furlongs." I inquire as to why they set out to walk to Emmaus. Let us examine briefly the background and see the circumstances, and how they felt. This is where I underline the beauty and blessedness of the three graces,- faith, hope, and love. The two, as the others, were blessed with the exercise of faith. They had not lost their faith: there is no such thing as that. Faith may be low as to exercise and operative influences and power. If God has given you living faith you have faith. You have only got to read your Bible to see however low the people of God sank there was always a little faith coming up. "Yet I will look again." If there is no faith one is in black despair.

So they had not lost their faith: they could not. You see how what we began with demonstrates this. They constrained Him: there was faith in their heart...I have found over many years I have never lost faith since

the Lord gave it me. I have been as low as can be, but I have never lost my faith: it has always emerged. In what you are exercised with, or you believe God has given you, you never lose faith. God will show you His word and it will revive your drooping faith. Job came to a place in adversity where he could say; "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Do you know this faith?

So they could not lose their faith. And they had the exercise of love. They never ceased to love. Love is immortal: their sadness proved this. It was resultant from the fact that He was dead, as they thought. How they loved Him! Their world had gone. If you lose your Saviour your world has gone: there is nothing anywhere; either here or hereafter. O how they loved Him! But the basic thing was, and you will anticipate. They had lost in a certain sense their hope, because it was in the tomb with Him. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done." Their hope was buried in the grave. What a place to come to! What a safe place for your hope,† in Christ's tomb, because it sees no corruption. Amen.