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IN ITS
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ATTACHMENT BY GOD

James Renton

Deuteronomy 7: 7,8

These are the words of Moses, his own impression of what God's people meant to Him. He said in verse 6, "For a holy people art thou unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be unto him a people for a possession, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth". It indicates how Jehovah valued His people. He said Himself in Exodus 19, "If ye will hearken to my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be my own possession out of all the peoples - for all the earth is mine - and ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (vv 5,6). It is what His people are to be to Him as something special, not only as the earth is His - of course it is His, He made it - but there is something on the earth that is a special possession .

We read, "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you". It is very affecting that Moses speaks about Jehovah being attached to them, not because they were more in number, not because of anything that men could take account of, but because Jehovah loved them. He was attached to them because He loved them. We are accustomed to speak about love as following attachment. We love the Lord Jesus by first of all becoming attached to Him, but here it is the reverse order, Jehovah was attached to them because He loved them. I suppose that love for us would involve His purpose. Moses said, He has chosen you. We are loved because in purpose we were chosen. His love is His attitude, it is the disposition of His heart; but then it says He has been "attached to you". That is a very fine thing. Attachment involves something very personal, persons in whom God is interested. We sometimes speak about the disciples being attached to the Lord Jesus, and so they were, but think of the Lord Jesus attached to His disciples! Think of how He was attached to them, think of how He went in and out amongst them during the

three and a half years of His service here! It says, "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end", John 13: 1. The Lord Jesus became attached to the disciples, and He would become attached to every one of us because of His love. His love is His general disposition, but "being attached to" is something personal.

We would all do well to consider the Lord Jesus being attached to us; He certainly was attached to His disciples. He went in and out amongst them, He taught them, He cared for them, He acted as a father towards them. Three times over the Lord addresses them as His children, He cared for them as a father. He became attached to them. According to John's gospel the Lord felt leaving them, He was so attached to them. They felt the Lord leaving them, but He felt leaving them. Think of the forty days in which He went in and out amongst them - not only His lifetime here, but in the forty days, was He not attached to them? He said to Mary, "I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren", John 20: 17. He was so attached to His brethren that He did not immediately ascend to the Father; He was forty days among them and He felt leaving them, but He made ample provision for them. He speaks in John 14, 15 and 16 about the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. In effect the Lord says to the disciples, the Comforter will be just as much attached to you as I have been.

And so it is; think of the Holy Spirit attached to us, dear brethren. The Lord says about Him, "he abides with you, and shall be in you", John 14: 17. Think of how near the Holy Spirit has come in His attachment to each one of us! We sang about being sealed, being sealed with the Spirit, owned as God's property. Think of how the Spirit is attached to us! Once we receive the Spirit He remains with us. We have ignored Him, grieved Him, quenched Him, and yet He has become attached to us; He remains with us. The Lord Jesus was with the disciples a certain time, three and a half years, but He says about the Comforter, "that he may be with you for ever" (John 14: 16). He will not be like Me He will not leave you, He will be with you for ever. As long as we need Him in the testimony down here, the Spirit will be here. Just consider, dear brethren, how the Holy

Spirit has become attached to us because He loves us. We read in Romans 15 of "the love of the Spirit" (v 30); He loves us and has become attached to us, dwells in our bodies. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 6: 19). How immediate is the Spirit's presence with each believer. He has become attached to us.

Think of the Father being attached to us. The Lord said, "the Father himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me", John 16: 27. That expression "has affection for" is the same as "attached to" it is the word *phileo*, the word that Peter used in John 21 when he said, "I am attached to thee", and the Lord challenged him the third time, "Art thou attached to me?". It is the same expression as having affection for; it might be translated, The Father Himself is attached to you, because ye have become attached to Me. Think of the Father's love for His family, His committal to each one of us as belonging to His family, His children, His sons. It says here, "Not because ye were more in number than all the peoples, hath Jehovah been attached to you and chosen you, for ye are the fewest of all the peoples": they were not of much account in men's estimation - "but because Jehovah loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers". That is God's faithfulness, God's faithful love.

Consider, dear brethren, for our encouragement that the Lord Jesus is committed to us and has become attached to us. The Holy Spirit is committed to us, sealed us, is attached to us. The Father in His love, His interest in us, has become attached to us. What a comfort this is! There is much to face, maybe for young people especially, much to confront them, difficulties, temptations, but oh, just to be conscious of divine attachment to each one of us!

May the Lord encourage us!

WHAT CAN BE RELIED ON

William Grosse

John 13: 1; 14: 15-19; 1 Corinthians 2: 9-12

This first scripture has already been referred to, but it was on my mind as well, following a touch we had on Lord's day as to the love that could be relied on. I felt that this passage brought out something which would encourage us as to what can be relied on.

"Jesus knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end": think of the greatness of the love of Christ - it is something that can be relied on. There may be the side of our responsibility, but it is presented here that "having loved his own who were in the world" He "loved them to the end". 'To the end' involves through everything, every difficulty, every problem, every circumstance. What a wonderful lover the Lord Jesus is! It is love that can be relied on. In the world there is so much we cannot rely on, but we can rely on the love of Jesus. I know there is the side on which we would give Him a basis for loving us, but as we are seeking to go on in the pathway and be in the testimony we can prove and experience the love that can be relied on. It is wonderful to think that we can touch something that is firm, that never will move, never will change. A hymn says

'The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but His loved ones know' (No 279)

Think of the love of Jesus, the love that can be experienced. We get a touch of it at the Supper, and it would affect us to think of the love that can be relied on. "Having loved his own who were in the world": think of those who are in the world, think of the fact that we belong to Him "His own"; what a word that is! We are not of the world, we have to go through it but we belong to Jesus. John's gospel brings

out the greatness of His Person as Son of God, the sun and centre of another world, but I love the word 'Jesus' because it brings to our hearts the One who has loved us and would give us the sense of what can be relied on. As our brother was saying, we can experience this love; there is nothing greater that can hold us. We are here because we have affection for the Lord Jesus, that glorious One who is in heaven, the One whom we know, the One whom we love, and we would desire to be here in fidelity to Him. I noticed in some notes of meetings that Mr Deck said, Unless we are looking for the Lord's coming every day we are not really as we should be. Well, that is a test, but the thought of looking for His coming - the rapture and the appearing - should be in our hearts more than it is. Our brother suggests that we should have that daily in our hearts. Some of us perhaps need help in this, but that would be the right idea, that you are waiting for the Lord to come.

But while we are here, chapter 14 brings out that His love for us involves that He is going away, and He says, "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you". What a wonderful thing that is! It is related to the Spirit coming. "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will beg the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever". Think of this, the divine provision for the time the Lord is away; when He is away the Comforter is here. What a wonderful lover the Lord is! Now, you might say, when does that happen? Well, as I understand, it would involve particularly the time of the Supper when we would prove the Lord coming to us. What a wonderful thing - "I will not leave you orphans". Think of an orphan, without father or mother, think of what an orphan's feelings are, but the Lord realised what that would be, His disciples having been so attached to Him. Our brother has spoken of attachment; think of the attachment of the disciples to Him, and how the Lord was attached to them, and then all that changing. But the Lord says "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you". What a wonderful privilege the Supper is, when we get a sense of His coming and the reliability of His love. We would not say that the Lord comes automatically, but if there is love in our hearts for Him He will come;

we have proved it. "I will" - something that can be relied on - "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you".

In Corinthians I thought of the great area of things that we are brought into, which we can rely on, the area of the Spirit. We have seen in John 14 that the Lord says "I will not leave you orphans", but He also speaks about "another Comforter ... the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive". What a wonderful Person the Holy Spirit is! We think about His glory and greatness, and what I am thinking of is that there is something that can be relied on. The Spirit would bring us into an area of things that we can enjoy and enter into which will not change. Think of this: "Things which eye has not seen" - things beyond the faculty of the human eye. It is remarkable to think of what is beyond the natural order of things, which some of us who are not very spiritual do not know much about but we would long to know more about, "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard" - the human ear, as it were, has not heard, it is beyond it - "and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him". What a wonderful God He is! Think of the greatness of His love, and the love would be so great that He would give us this as something that we can rely on. We can rely on the fact that we can enter into some of these wonderful experiences, undoubtedly at the Supper, and other meetings too, but particularly at the Supper, "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him, but God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God". This is a wonderful passage; as dependent on the Holy Spirit He would reveal these things to us, "Things ... which God has prepared". Think of them. We experience them maybe in our reading meetings or in other occasions, something related to the depths of God, the depths, we might say, in God's love. The depths of God is a very positive thought, what God has for the saints to enjoy. We come to the meetings and would desire to get the benefit of the meetings, where we would touch something of the depths of God, the treasures that come out. Think of the wonder of these treasures: "Things which

eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him". I think it would link on with what Paul says, that he "heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter" (2 Cor 12: 4), and some of these depths we find in Paul's ministry. I was just thinking of the reliability of these things. As dependent on the Spirit, God would see that we enter into some of them. For the Lord's Name's sake.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Willie Dickson

Genesis 35: 1-5

I have been thinking a little about the house of God which has been before us in our Lord's day afternoon readings. Much enters into a dwelling place for God, and when we converse together on these matters our minds always go back to the initial reference to God's house, linked with Jacob earlier on in this book. We now find a further reference here. The exhortation to Timothy is that we might know how to behave ourselves in God's house, which is the pillar and base of the truth (see 1 Tim 3: 15). It has come to me that it would greatly regulate our conduct if we were more cognisant of the fact that we are in God's house. There is the side of it that we are God's house, and there is the side in which we are in God's house, and I think that being in God's house would be a great regulating factor. Perhaps I do not need to say this, but this material building in which we are is not God's house. A believer who has the Spirit is always in God's house; that is the teaching of 1 Timothy. While you work, or wherever you move, in your household or in your assembly relations, you are in God's house, God's dwelling-place, and the onus is on you to know how to behave yourself there.

Now that light affected Jacob when God said "Arise, go up to Bethel". I suppose most of our Christian life - well, I speak for myself - is made up of stops and starts. Jacob here makes a fine start when, after his years of wandering, his ups and downs in Laban's house and his trouble with his brother Esau, he responds to the divine injunction to go up to Bethel. I think it would change our conduct remarkably if we came to that point, that we are going up to Bethel, we are going up to God's house. God said to him, "Arise, go up to Bethel ... And Jacob said to his household ... Put away the strange gods that are among you, and cleanse yourselves, and change your garments, and we will arise, and go up to Bethel".

What prompted Jacob to say that? What was the underlying state of his soul? He must have had some sense of what was rightly due to and connected with God's house. He must have had some spiritual sensibilities that there are certain conditions attached to God's dwelling-place. That was why he told his household to cleanse themselves, put away strange gods and change their garments. He said "I will make there an altar to the God that answered me in the day of my distress". Is that not fine? Far better to have an altar in Bethel than to have a strange god in the house, far better to have the liberty of divine approach and a place in the divine presence than to have a strange god in the house. That is what Jacob came to. "And they gave to Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hand, and the rings that were in their ears" - no demur, no argument, immediate submission to the head of the house. They did it. And then it says, "and Jacob hid them under the terebinth that is by Shechem". That would be an allusion, I believe to baptism. The word 'hid' could be translated 'buried', and in Christianity it is an obvious reference to baptism. In other words, he judged that these things that were unsuitable had to go in the light of the death of Christ. It is interesting that the place in which he hid them was at Shechem.

Shechem is the place of no compromise. I think, in all our lives, in our experiences, our histories, there have been matters where the Lord has said to us, You must deal with this uncompromisingly. It has arisen in our employment, in our homes, in other matters; the Lord has said to us, If you are going to enjoy the privileges of the

house of God you must be uncompromising in your judgment of that which is out of keeping with the divine dwelling and is defiling. I seek to bring this home to all our hearts. We have had to face things, in our families sometimes, in our work, and the only escape route was to deal with the issue without compromise. May we be encouraged. These are milestones in Christian history. They give you backbone, give you some understanding of the Lord's love. We have been speaking of the love that can be relied on and the love with which God is attached to us. Could the Lord rely on us? That is the great test in 2 Timothy days.

Now I want to say something about verse 16: "And they journeyed from Bethel. And there was yet a certain distance to come to Ephrath, when Rachel travailed in childbirth; and it went hard with her in her childbearing". And, verse 19, "And Rachel died, and was buried on the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem". I think that is something we know about practically. Oft-times, when you take an uncompromising stand with regard to a matter, you think it will now be sunshine all the way. Read your own heart, you know what I am saying is true. You take a stand and you say to yourself, The Lord will honour me for this and everything will be fine. Jacob suffered the biggest sorrow of his life when he lost Rachel. Beloved brethren, the ways of God are not our ways, not our ways at all. He is working with us to give us understanding that He is attached to us in love but He has to discipline us sometimes, even when we think we are right and going on the right path. The Lord comes in in all these things.

May the Lord help us, beloved brethren. The house of God is the divine dwelling-place. To know it livingly, young and old alike, will help us. May the Lord grant it for His Name's sake. Amen.

EDINBURGH

8 May 1990

PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD

James Alex Gardiner

John 19: 17,18 Isaiah 35: 8-10

We have been speaking, beloved, about hospitality. We were saying in the reading that God is inviting persons to come into His house; He wants to entertain them, make them happy, He wants to bring them into His family, He wants to bless them eternally, make them eternally satisfied and fill their hearts with joy and gladness.

And we would appeal to you. You know, the world is full of sayings - they say amongst other things, Be my guest. God would say that.

Come into God's house and be entertained by Him, be His guest if you are prepared for that, if that is as far as you want to go. That is not really what is in His heart and His mind; He does not just want you to be a guest in there. The parable speaks about that, the guests at the wedding feast; the king came in to look at the guests to see how they were doing, whether they were enjoying the feast, and he found there a man who did not have on a wedding garment. We need to have a wedding garment for God provides it, He provides the clothing, He provides everything, and you do not have to bring anything. Have you ever been offered that kind of hospitality? God offers you this kind of hospitality. We had a fine preaching once - I think it was from Mr Parker - about Jesus on the cross. God has come in Himself in the Person of Christ in order that you may be blessed, in order that He can extend this invitation to you. I ask you, Would you like blessing? Would you like to be saved? I think Mr Parker said about these two robbers that there was one on this side and one on that side. Obviously John was on this side; there is this side of the cross and there is that side. Which side would you be on? Jesus was in the middle, crucified, God in love in the Person of the Son bearing the burdens of the universe, the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world, taking it away, beloved. What a work is the work of Christ! There He was, crucified. It says of Him in that gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God", John 1:

1, 2. And that Man was crucified. That is man's estimation of God; they were the finest of men, the most intellectual, the most religious of men, the most refined. That is the best that man could produce and that is his estimation of God. But God's estimation of him is that it is a place of a skull. There is no intelligence whatsoever in that act of man, none whatsoever, showing the emptiness, the complete futility of human thinking in the presence of the most magnificent presentation of divine love. That was where Jesus was crucified, He went out bearing His cross. What royalty there was in that, the Lion of the tribe of Judah! That is Christ going out so as to take away the sin of the world. He is working the greatest matter that ever has been wrought out between man and God. It is the complete solution to this whole question of sins and sin. Reconciliation has been effected the whole work has been completed by Christ in suffering on the cross in the greatest display of divine love that could ever possibly have been known. God has done that in Christ, beloved.

He did not have to do it, you know. You did not ask Him to do it: He did it of His own volition, His motives were His own - 'The motives, too, Thine own, the plan, the counsel, Thine' (hymn 92). That is God, that is the God who comes and sends out this invitation.

Imagine God in the wonder of His grace saying to you now, Would you like to come into My house? I can forgive your sins, I can set you up in My family, I can impart My nature to you, I can bring you into sonship, I can change your status, I can greatly upgrade your status, I can transfer you from a condition of sinful lost man as in Adam, to the wonder and glory of eternal stability in Christ. What an invitation, beloved! That is God. It is the place of a skull, but He would say, You have to come this way. Which side are you on? Are you coming on to this side or are you still on that side? It is solemn, very solemn. But whilst it is the day of grace - and what a marvellous day it is! - there is also revealed wrath of God from heaven, because He is going to come and cleanse this whole scene. The Lord Jesus on the cross, the Lamb of God, is taking away the sin of the world. He has established the righteous basis for that.

Very shortly He is going to come out as the Son and Heir and He is going to claim the inheritance for God. Finally He will take sin away

completely, remove it altogether, so that there will not be one trace of sin, of distance, of alienation. There will not be one trace left of the first order of man - not one trace. It is a fine thing that in eternity you will not even have a conscience because there will be nothing whatsoever that is contrary to God.

How do you feel about this wonderful invitation that God has given? You say, I am not so sure. That is nothing new; God knows about that. Those men in the parable in Luke 14 had their various answers; one said he had married a wife, one bought oxen, one did something else, and another something else. Beloved, do not default, do not put it off, do not procrastinate, you might never have another opportunity to come to grips, come to the wonderful terms, come to the blessed acceptance of this invitation. You know, we write on the bottom R.S.V.P. - R.S.V.P. yes you come. Come now is the idea, come on to this other side where salvation is known. Jesus has shed His blood, He has given up that life to which no sin, no distance, in Him ever attached, the life that was ever for God's pleasure. Christ came in and took up that condition of manhood, glorified God in it in flesh and blood upon this very earth where we are alive now, where man's will and man's mind is rampant and dominant. He came here, the stranger Jesus completely different from everybody else and not for one second, or for one millionth of a second did He in any way deviate from what was due to God for His pleasure. There was a life of perfection and that life was made a sacrifice, that Man was made a sacrifice for sin. How glorious is the sin-offering! The shedding of His blood is the proof that He had given up His life. He was carried right into the very presence of God; He has gone in in the power of His own blood, what a transaction that is! He is the ark, but then along with the ark was the mercy-seat. If it had not been for the mercyseat the ark would have been alone for ever. There is the mercy-seat and the blood is on it, and, beloved, the invitation comes to you now from God, from above the mercy-seat, from, it says, between the Cherubim. It is from there that He speaks; He speaks to you with the complete assurance that all the claims of His holy nature have been totally satisfied. There are the

Cherubim, the great guardians of divine righteousness, wholly occupied with the precious blood of Christ, and God free as having been totally vindicated in the death of Christ, totally justified, glorified with regard to everything that may have come in by man in the way of sin.

Suppose nobody will ever come to Christ, still God is glorified in that work, His nature vindicated, His rights upheld, His attributes magnified. That is the background to this wonderful invitation that God gives to you in the glad tidings. Which way are you going to go? You will leave this room and you are going somewhere - everybody is going somewhere. In the mercy of God we hope to go back to Toronto and then go home; we will be going somewhere.

But how are you going to go? Are you coming into this way of holiness that the prophet speaks of? Come on to this side. Do not remain on that side, come on to this side, come into the way of holiness; it is very fine that way. That is what it says in Isaiah: "And a highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness". Are you coming on to this highway? Highways in Scripture are very wonderful. This is a great highway; it leads straight up into heaven, that is where it is going. Are you coming with us? Are you going to come? Or are you going to stay in your sins, in the awfulness of that condition, a condition of dereliction? That is what this world is, like one great big derelict. You come into Brooklyn and there are more cars with wheels off and their bodies ripped up - what is it? It is the dereliction of humanity, that is what man is. God wants to set you up and make a man of you, make a woman of you, according to His own pleasure. Oh, what a change, what a transformation that God can bring about in your soul! Samuel said that to Saul: "thou ... shalt be turned into another man", 1 Sam 10: 6. Are you going out of this room the same way you came in?

Beloved, if you are still in your sins how sorrowful that would be because it would mean that you have gone out in the refusal of this marvellous invitation that God has given. He wants to show you hospitality, He wants to be kind. He has an abundance of resource. You have nothing to fear. The grace and love towards man of our

Saviour God has appeared. There it was in Luke 10 in the Samaritan, grace and love towards man of our Saviour God appeared. All the resources are there in view of your blessing. You say, I am not so sure, I have some hankering after Jericho, I have some hankering after the world - but whatever for? What do you want the world for? What does it minister to you? The Spirit of God in the Bible has shown us that it is the place of a skull, that is all it is. Now look at this highway, this way of holiness.

You do not have to be clever to come into it; it requires nothing. It does not require great intelligence. Read what it says in the Bible: "the unclean shall not pass through it; but it shall be for these".

When you come on to this side, beloved, you become clean. Is that not wonderful? It is for you if you are unclean in your uncleanness in your sinfulness. It is a terrible thing to be unclean. Have you ever been unclean in the presence of clean people, feeling you can do with a wash, you can do with a brush up? Beloved, God can cleanse you; He can do that. He would wash you from your sins in the blood of Christ and you become clean. How would you like to become clean? Then you will be no embarrassment to God, you will be no embarrassment to yourself, you will be no embarrassment to this wonderful company. Every one of them has come the same way, nobody has come a different way. This great way is for you.

Unclean persons do not go this way but it is for them. As you accept God's invitation He will give you the best robe. Is that not fine? Out there they are clothed in rags, and the filth and the stamp of the world may be upon you, the stamp of the far country where the violent famine is, where there is fear and terror and all that kind of thing, for people are living on their nerves, there is no settled disposition of quietude and peacefulness, they are always wondering what is going to happen next. God is taking all that away from you, taking the rags off you, making you clean and clothing you in the best robe and you now have status, you are somebody, you are in the right society. God says, Come on into My house and you will be amongst the best society that you could possibly be in, the happiest society that it is possible to be in. How about it? What an appeal

there is in God's love. Get the best robe and be clean. It says, "Those that go this way - even fools, - shall not err therein". Is that not wonderful? I suppose everybody in this room can say Amen to that; we have all been very foolish at times. Even a fool shall not err therein, it says. And you are perfectly safe: "No lion shall be there, nor shall ravenous beast go up thereon, nor be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there". How beautiful that is - to walk in the way of holiness! It says in Revelation 21 that there is one street in the city, everyone is going the same way, it is pure gold. How would you like to walk in the street of that city? It is a fine thing to walk in that street; in the midst of the street is the tree of life. There is everything to satisfy your affections, cause you to be alive, alive to God.

Oh, beloved, how wonderful it is to be in God's house! We have to accept the invitation. Go on and read what it says: "And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return". How about returning? This is the time for it, a very propitious time to return, "and come to Zion with singing". Come back again to the appreciation of the greatness of divine sovereignty and mercy. God has come out in Christ towards you. What we have come to! We have come to mount Zion, a position of stability in the sovereign mercy and grace of God. You find perfect administration, the city of the living God. All these glorious things, beloved, belong to Christianity, and God says, They will all be yours if you accept this invitation I am extending to you.

The father went out to the elder son and besought him; he went out into the street I have no doubt and humbled himself and besought him to come in, "Child, thou art ever with me". Oh, beloved, God's heart goes out today in its fulness towards humanity, beseeching - beseeching you. Think of God; He did not have to do that, but He loves you so much, beloved, He has come right down to where you are in the beseeching character of His grace. He says, Are you coming in? Come on in, He speaks the language that you can understand, that is our God. "Come to Zion with singing; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away". Sorrow and

sighing have no place in the Father's house. The testimony, beloved, is through the music and the dancing. You will find that things that you wondered about become realities - "the mirage shall become a pool". You went there and it is gone. There is nothing like that in God's house. This is the reign of Christ millennially. He wants to come into your heart and reign there. As we were saying in the reading, swing your heart's door widely open and He will gladly enter in. How about it? God in the gospel is for you and for your salvation, for your blessing. Why should it be so? It is all, beloved, because He loves you. That is the extent, for it is to whosoever, and whosoever means you, whosoever means me; that is God. God so loved the world: what a verse that is, John 3: 16! Heaven will be full of persons who will be able to quote John 3: 16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever" - whosoever, say it again and again, "whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal". Oh, beloved, what an invitation! What a full and free and unmerited invitation! There it is, for you personally here in this room to come into God's house, dressed in holy accord with it. The rags are all outside, you have on the best robe and you are in there and you are with God and feeding on the precious death of Christ, that is the fatted calf; He has kept it, you know, stored it up for you especially. And you sit there with the Father and feed upon it, "let us eat" He says, "and make merry". You are not sitting there in any doleful attitude, not thinking about the things that are past, no, you are in the Father's house and your heart's occupation is Christ and the Father; "let us eat and make merry: for this my son was dead and has come to life, was lost and has been found. And they began to make merry". How would you like to start making merry now? And it goes on and on for ever.

Well, beloved, that is the invitation, that is God's appeal in the glad tidings. Now He says, You had better answer and answer it quickly. He says, Are you going to come? You say, Yes, I am going to come, I am going to go in. May it be so, may that be the answer of every heart. For His Name's sake.

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GEOGRAPHY FOR THE CHILDREN

I remember reading of a traveller who, about a century ago, climbed with the help of two swarthy Arabs to the top of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh in Egypt. This Pyramid rises hundreds of feet above the desert and the view from the top in the morning sunshine must have been magnificent. What impressed the traveller most forcibly, however, was the sharp dividing line between the smiling and verdant valley of the river Nile on the one hand, and on the other hand the brown and barren desert stretching away westwards to the horizon.

This division could not possibly be observed from the low ground of the ups and downs of the desert's edge but, once the height was reached, all was clearly defined. The traveller, who was a Christian believer, remarked on the likeness of this to the dividing line between saved and unsaved persons, those who are alive to God and those who as yet do not know Him as a Saviour-God.

Once we climb in our minds and spirits to the height of God's revelation of Himself in Christ Jesus, we trace on the one hand the verdant valley of the river of His grace bringing life, peace and joy to those who dwell on its banks. There is no middle ground, so that on the other hand there are those who refuse the Glad Tidings and remain separated from the happiness of being in the sunshine of God's love, brought to us by and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Where do you dwell?

J.C.Evershed