

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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GOD'S DWELLING IN LIGHT

1 Timothy 6: 16

John 1: 14, 16-18; 13: 1, 3, 4; 16: 25-30; 17: 26

Ephesians 1: 3-6

NJH In the service of God on Lord's day this verse as to God "dwelling in unapproachable light" struck me, and while it relates to what is unrevealed, what the creature cannot take in, we felt power to address God worshipfully, God in His eternal, essential Being, which is beyond us. We acknowledge it that we can only know what is revealed to us. But it immediately opened my thoughts to approachable light. If God is "dwelling in unapproachable light", there is such a thing as approachable light. It gave me the impression that the Lord would have us to follow up who God is, then His approach manward, and then our approach to God, which must be, of course, based on revelation. So I thought on this occasion we should look at God's approach as taking into account His eternal, essential Being, One, as it says here, "whom no man has seen, nor is able to see". I just thought there are so many young here as well that the more we get grounded and get an impression of how great God is, it will erase from our minds the influence of other gods and idolatry which surround us. Also it would be well to remind ourselves that when some of us who are older were young, the truth of God coming in in Christ was bypassed or ignored by the educational system of the world, but now the world is characterised by direct opposition to it. I thought it might be good for us just to consider carefully how God has moved in revelation. We have been carefully taught not to link certain names with the Persons of the Godhead until the incarnation. It should cause us to be careful together, but eager to get some impression of the greatness of God. I noticed in ministry that 'God has stepped into the realm of the purpose of His love, in the centre of which is a Man known as "the Beloved"', JT vol 33 p194. Think of that: stepping into the realm of the purpose of love, connected with a Man that is known as the Beloved! I think that is very precious. That is how God moved. We cannot go back into His eternal existence, but Ephesians sets out the way He has moved in His Man. Therefore God can speak about "marked us out beforehand", "taken us into favour in the Beloved", and so on. These expressions can be used because God has stepped into the realm of the purpose of His love.

I thought in this reading we should look at God's approaching it from that side and, therefore, it is, as we said, "who only has

immortality” and “dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see”. The apostle Paul gives us more in relation to that than anybody else, but John does twice say, "No man has seen God at any time", chap 1: 18, 1 John 4: 12. We are cautioned as to how great God is, but He has come in, as we have in John 1 that “the Word became flesh”, that is, the movement of God in the Trinity. One blessed Man, our Lord Jesus and in that Man, the Godhead was there, 'God manifest in flesh'. I just thought we should maybe go over these scriptures together and see if we can get help as to them. Would that be all right?

DBB I am just wondering whether we realise that God has shone into our hearts to give us an appreciation of these things, but then is it a question of us apprehending them?

NJH I think we will come to that, and that is a good thing to speak about, that God had to operate in us to receive it. I suppose that is why “born ... of God” comes in before this in John 1 (v 13), but the first thing is God's sovereign movement from His own side, when nothing existed outside the Deity. It was God. It was the purpose of His will to do so. God moved. Firstly He created the heavens and the earth. Then He waited four thousand years in which He had to do with His creature man, including His dealings with Israel which were generally on a representative basis. Generally it was angelic form that was used. When it comes to the incarnation, God was there in Christ. Now if that could come into every heart, every young heart, as I have said, it would allay the influence of idolatry and the gods that are in the world, and would come down to what God is Himself before our souls.

DJW In the beginning of Genesis God says, “Let there be light”, chap 1: 3. That was a sovereign movement on His behalf, and it involves a certain energy on His part. It involves the movements of love at that point.

NJH The word 'stepped' has been used. It means there was some movement. We cannot say what was involved. All we know is love was there. And there was, of course, an issue earlier in the recovery as to whether His eternal, essential Being was love, but His *nature* is love, JT Letters vol 1 p401. We partake of love, divine love, but we cannot partake of His essential Being. That is God. That exists. Even with revelation there is still the essential being of God, which no one is able to see. We have to recognise that. But when it comes to Genesis 1, He speaks. He is entering into what is relative in the creation as I understand it.

GR God was completely sufficient in Himself but because of His great love He desired an object outside Himself, and so He created man?

NJH That is good. That God had a reason: it was His *nature*, due to His nature, His love, He wanted an object. I like that. That helps. But it had to start with God, and while we cannot go into relationship exactly as to what was before, the Lord does say in John 17, “thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world”, v 24. So we know love was there; we have a scriptural basis. At meetings in Barnet in 1929 adjustment came in (vol 29 p 361) as to the matter of eternal sonship; Mr James Taylor clearly said that He was there personally in the beginning, but to go as far to give Him a personal name of designation then is going beyond scripture, but that the *Person was there* is the great point. Three Persons were there, but applying names to them then we cannot do. It is beyond us. It just says here He dwells “in unapproachable light”. Thank God we can revel in approachable light. God has approached us. I realise it is very deep for all of us but I should just like us to think for a moment what God did *Himself*. He purposed in *Himself*. He had no one else to turn to but He had objects in mind for His love.

CKR Could you just open up for us the difference between the absolute and the relative?

NJH You can help us.

CKR I am just remembering that, in 'Divine Names' (see vol 50 p268 etc.), Mr James Taylor said very clearly and very strongly that there is what is absolute, which he says means one is not related to any person or thing and can relate only to God Himself. But there is what has become relative, which involves the revelation and the opening up of the names of divine Persons in a way in which they were never known before.

NJH That is very helpful. The absolute side of God remains; that does not change; it is always there; so the spirit of worship should be on our hearts. We acknowledge it, but we thank God that He has moved into the area of revelation. That is what we need, and all I thought is we should get that into our souls. There is nothing like it. Idolatry starts with the devil and he brings it into fallen man. In Isaiah 44: 13-19, man makes an idol and it is himself. It is just at his own level. He cannot look beyond what is horizontal. But God is moving in His majesty from, you might say, the absolute side which remains, coming into revelation in

Christ and therefore “the Word became flesh”.

DJW Would the understanding of the absolute side, as far as we are able to grasp it, bring stability into the soul? It would be impossible that God should change.

NJH He is the only One. Of course, the “form of God”, as it is referred to elsewhere, in Philippians (chap 2: 6), exists, except that One came into “a bondman's form”, v 7. With every other person it would be lawless to change your form, but when Christ came into the place, it was “a bondman's form”. He did that. That was how divine Persons moved '*usward*', as was said in the old ministry, *usward*, towards us. He approached man, the objects of His love, and He approached them in His Beloved.

JCG Hebrews brings out that “he that draws near to God must believe that he is”, chap 11: 6. Do you think that that corresponds with the revelation in Christ of the “I am”. It is the continuing existence, is it not?

NJH It is. The “I am” is one of the greatest names, but we know, “that he is” - not that 'he was' - who God is, and that we believe. We trust in that.

JAT Could you help me, please, “who only has immortality”, is that unique? You are speaking about what is really unique to God and the apostle says, “who only has immortality”. To my mind, simply, it suggests the uniqueness of God. It brings out that there is only one God to us. To Christians there is only one God. It is the uniqueness of God. I cannot say more but it struck me: “who only has immortality”.

NJH “Man became a living soul”, Gen 2: 7. That was through the breath of God. God breathed into man, and, therefore, we will put on immortality, but only God *has* immortality. But it is through the breath of God, as I understand it, that “Man became a living soul”, and through that, when death or change take place, we put on immortality in resurrection.

JAT No one gave existence to God. He is the self-existent One.

NJH Exactly. He had no beginning. I know Melchisedec is only a type of Christ “having neither beginning of days nor end of life” (Heb 7: 3), but again with God it is “who only has immortality”. Think of young minds laying hold of that! You think you have life ahead of you. What do you have: seventy, eighty, ninety years? What is that? He never

had beginning. God never had beginning. He “only has immortality”. He never has end. That is how great God is.

JTB The fact that He is able to dwell complacently in unapproachable light, which no creature could ever hope to do, demonstrates His uniqueness.

NJH That is good. It is light; it is still light; but it is “unapproachable light”. There is light now, but it is approachable; it is in revelation. Ah the glory of it, beloved brethren, the glory of the revelation in Christ! But to start with I just felt the need for this to be embedded in every heart as to the greatness of God.

RDP-r So when He speaks to Moses, He says, “loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground”, Exod 3: 5. Are we standing on holy ground today?

NJH Yes. I was going to say greater ground because He says He is “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”, v 6. But now we are speaking really of Christ's God. I know Christ is God, but it is relative now to the revelation of God; and that is a tremendous thing.

TDB I was thinking of the scripture, “If he only thought of himself ... All flesh would expire together”, Job 34: 14, 15.

NJH That is right. That should bring solemnity into our souls because if God thought only of Himself, He would withdraw our breath and all flesh would expire. Our lives are in His hands. All of us have been young, but we might not all be old. We might not all actually see old age, either because of the coming of the Lord, or the Lord taking us. Life is so fragile: “whose breath is in his nostrils” (Isa 2: 22); that is man. But just think for a moment of the greatness of this One, as has been referred to already, “dwelling in unapproachable light”.

RHB It was never sufficient for God to be unseen and unapproachable, which is why He has come out in the incarnation. I was thinking of Him dwelling like that, unknown and unknowable really, but it magnifies the grace of the fact that without any other reason than the reason of His own heart, He should come out in incarnation so that He should be seen: “He that has seen me has seen the Father”, John 14: 9, and He should be approached by such as the woman in Luke 7.

NJH Yes, “dwelling in unapproachable light” means He could have remained there. There was never a beginning to that. That was always the condition in which the Deity remained, “unapproachable light”, but,

as has been said, His nature desired an object. You think for a moment that He wanted something outside of Himself, as has been said, that He can open up His heart to, and to be seen in a blessed Man, "in the Beloved". How tender God's feelings! How He has worked in patience and love!

But for this reading I thought we should keep to these scriptures. We should maybe just cover them because there is quite a lot in them. We have often referred to "the Word became flesh". It was not 'made' as Mr Darby's translation helps us in. He "became flesh". I think that is something special to lay hold of. It took tangible form, that He could be seen.

BWB There was a remarkable expression years ago as to 'the dip into time', JT vol 54 p103. That is what is in this verse, is it, "the Word became flesh", the glory of descending love, and so near that man himself should draw near to God?

NJH That came into my mind when I came across that article referring to Him stepping 'into the realm of the purpose of His love, in the centre of which is a Man known as "the Beloved"'. It is a parallel thought and I think equally good that 'dip into time', that God came into time, and He came in in a tangible blessed Man to secure persons, but at the moment it is God's approach I want to keep to.

QP Paul, in opening up the glories of the Person of Christ in Colossians, says that He is "image of the invisible God", chap 1: 15. Does that bear on this, that the image is what we can take account of?

NJH That would enter into it. These are all deep expressions, and we have to be very careful. The glories are so precious relating to God, the three Persons, that we have to be very careful, but I think that does link, that He is the invisible God, but we see Him there in Christ.

JCG Say something as to the fact that the Lord became Man. Hebrews indicates that "he does not indeed take hold of angels by the hand" (chap 2: 16), but there is something in relation to God's pleasure and purpose in men that the Lord became incarnate. Help us as to that, please.

NJH Well, that is a deep matter. We know little of angels. (When trade union power spread in Australia and New Zealand it was said we were not supplicating the Lord for angelic help, JT Letters 2 p398.) But, while other creatures breathe, the breath of man is special. Breath is not said to relate to angels in this way as far as I am aware. God

breathed into man - that was special. Then breath is one type of the Holy Spirit, Ezek 37: 9. God took account of that. I think it shows where His will was relating to man and therefore one of the Godhead came into manhood.

PJH Does that show that God was yearning? I was thinking of Isaiah, "Come now, let us reason together", chap 1: 18?

NJH Yes, He started with man, but He did not start with Christ, but Christ was in His mind. When God breathed into Adam, He was thinking of Christ. He would bring Him in, the Man of His purpose.

PM Does God find pleasure in making Himself known in One who could display what His heart is? An angel could never do that.

NJH That is exactly right.

PM The yearnings of the heart of God lay behind the incarnation, that He should make His heart known to man, and the secrets of that heart were manifested in One who was here because He became flesh.

NJH That is beautiful. And you think of these thirty years, speaking simply, the eyes of the Father looking into the eyes of Christ, every day, every morning, manhood at its choicest, according to the heart of God. He looked on that Man; God was manifest there. It was from the outset that "the Word became flesh". God was there. It did not come in in the anointing as some have said. It was there. All that He was in His Person beforehand, He brought into manhood. That is a blessed truth.

JMcK Can you say something as to the expression "flesh"?

NJH Please, on you go. We want to help each other.

JMcK It does not say He became man; so His infancy is included. This is a reference to the condition, and the infinite lowliness that that involved is touching.

NJH That is very good, and then we have part. We come in and have part in it. I am glad you have said that: it involves the condition. It is tangible. It is presented there. It is the Word that is referred to.

DJW Were you connecting breathing into us as a means of giving us capacity to appreciate His thoughts.

NJH You mean in breathing into His own, or do you mean the man at the beginning?

DJW At the beginning I was thinking.

NJH Well, the spirit of a man is his link with God, but, of course, that link was morally broken immediately by sin, but man is spirit, soul and body, and there is a capacity, and it must be the means of recovery and I think we will have that later, maybe tomorrow if the Lord directs us, as to how He would secure that, so that there is man's approach to God. But you have something more in your mind.

DJW We have spoken about love, but "Word" is not love; Word is communication. Have you something in mind in that?

NJH No, again it is a name that is mentioned in chapter 1: "In the beginning was the Word" (v 1), and we have been taught that the disciples came to that. They came to that Name, that description of that One who came in and has expressed everything. Angels could not do that, but the Word could. What was to be revealed would be revealed entirely in the Person of Christ. We should never go outside the Person of Christ. Revelation is there.

MJW Would you distinguish between God being in the light and God being light? Being in the light obviously involves the coming into manhood of the Lord Jesus. Please distinguish these two things for us.

NJH You mean the reference to "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all", 1 John 1: 5? Well, I do not know if I could tell the difference, but you give us some thought. You have been thinking about it. I suppose in the light must relate to His operations. What do you think?

MJW I thought of it at this point because it relates to the coming into manhood of the Lord Jesus: man is now in the light. But the other expression is a little different, that "God is light".

NJH "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all". It is over against darkness, I think, that God is light. That is what He is, you might say, His Being. But "in the light" (1 John 1: 7), as you say, suggests the incarnation; I think it is operational. It is the Trinity operating.

GR Would you say that God is bypassing angels so that He can have Christ and the assembly? Angels do not marry.

NJH Yes, He has great thoughts in mind in man. His greatest thoughts relate to manhood, and it is blessed to get into our souls. We need to lift the level of our thinking and get some impression of how God wanted to move as He did, move into revelation, move into time. God

had a reason for it, and that has to lay hold of us and hold our souls in relation to that truth.

PM Does the expression "the Word became flesh" relate to what goes through eternally? It is not exactly flesh and blood here, and I wondered if it related to the fact that all we shall ever know will be in this blessed Person who became flesh.

NJH Absolutely. That is where we will see God. He will be in Christ. What a privilege! We have that beforehand. Israel did not know that. No other family knew it, but the assembly is formed really by the revelation of God.

BWB We need a bit more help about that matter of flesh because in the risen condition it was "flesh and bones", Luke 24: 39. Scripture, of course, often associates flesh with what is sinful, "sin in the flesh", and so on. We need to distinguish, do we, that the corruption is sin in the flesh, not flesh in itself?

NJH No. Flesh there is a moral thought. We speak about the flesh in us but that is a moral thought. It is not what we see about the physical condition. It is a moral thought in which, we may remember, Christ stands apart. He was sinless: in Him sin was not. But manhood goes through, and that blessed humanity will be a delight to the Father eternally, and, by extension, in the saints. Glorious matter!

JW You are referring to the fact that the Father is implied in this, is He not? It is the character of the Lord's glory, "as of an only-begotten with a father" and then "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father". That bears on the revelation of God, does it? I wonder if you could help us.

NJH That is very helpful because we need to go on to that. We will find that in chapters 13 and 16 but here, as you say, it is "who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him". I understand declaration is like a universal court, announcement, declaration, established in the universe, that is declaration. Revelation is a different thought. Declaration is something brought out which you could not have had otherwise. The veil exists. But revelation is something more, but you have more in mind.

JW I was thinking it is really the way God has revealed what was in His heart that one divine Person should come into manhood and be in this relationship, "in the bosom of the Father".

NJH That is very blessed. When you think of the tenderness of it, He was loved by the Father before the foundation of the world (chapter 17: 24), but here He comes in as Man into the receptacle of the bosom of the Father. Now that is an immense matter if you think about it.

JW It has been said, has it not, that we know what was in the heart of God because He has had an Object for it?

NJH That is exactly what we are trying to get at. We need help from one another to be careful, and yet to grow in appreciation of the revelation of God in Christ, the One that has come into the bosom of the Father.

CKR “The Word became flesh,” but then “and dwelt among us”. That is beautiful.

NJH Tabernacling. He came into the bosom of the Father, and then He tabernacled with His own. He was alone there; we would have to say that is special to Christ. John lay in Christ's bosom, but Christ, the Son, is in the bosom of the Father. Think of the tenderness, the beauty of affection, that must have circulated in that atmosphere!

CKR Later on in the chapter He says to two disciples, “Come and see”, v 39.

NJH Yes, that is good.

CKR That is really what we are being attracted into in this reading in one sense: “Come and see”.

NJH That is right. They must have conveyed something of it, and that is what we are trying to touch now. We want to get into nearness to this Person who is in the bosom of the Father. That is that blessed Man in the affections of the Father. I think that brings us very close.

RDP The absoluteness of God is not weakened by the approach or changed. It remains unchanged. We always remember that, do we not? Does that always colour and affect our response and the way we are together in relation to God, that He *is*?

NJH Yes, exactly.

RDP When men change their approach to things, what has gone before is changed irrevocably, but there is no change in God.

NJH I am glad you have referred to that, because I think we should have liberty to recognise that unchangeable character of God remains,

the Deity. We are even short of expressions, of course, but then there is the revelation of God and that is in the three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That would be primarily in our thoughts in the service of God, the portion for the Father, and then touching the end of the service as to God. Is that what you had in mind?

RDP So in that scripture you get references which search you out. The way that God is approached brings in wonderful liberty, and has opened up the area of honour and homage and understanding; but then you get expressions sometimes such as "God is not mocked" (Gal 6: 7) as if we need to remember at all times, young and old, that He is still God in an absolute way.

NJH Yes, there was a development obviously from the footnote of Genesis 1, from what Mr Darby refers to, the absolute, and what Mr James Taylor brings out, that in the absolute sense He is unrelated to anything, even the creation. The absolute side of God is that it is without relation to anything outside the Deity, and that side exists. but God came in, "by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb 1: 2), for instance. The One we know as Christ was the One acted in a mediatorial way in the creation; but now we come to the Word becoming flesh. That did not alter the equality of Godhead. Think of that move! That was the greatest move. That was greater than creation, the Word becoming flesh. That was a greater thought that God was going to come in and dwell and be near to man so that, if the Lord will, we will look tomorrow at man being near to God.

JAT So it required one divine Person to take another form. I was thinking of the wonder involved, one glorious Person.

NJH Yes, exactly. I find that the safest thing when it comes to these deep and holy matters is to keep as far as we can to the word of the fathers of the recovery. That is the safest. Our brother has referred to 'Divine Names'. Young people should read it. It is not easy; it is deep; but read a bit and then add to it, and you will develop an appetite for it, and light will come into your soul. Mr Raven said, 'Nothing could affect the unity of the Godhead' (vol 3 p52), but, as you read through John's gospel, you will find that the Trinity was there, God was manifest in flesh.

HTF Would you say that we cannot apprehend these things by applying our minds as such to them, but it is by faith, and when we come to the Lord Jesus there, He is the particular Object for faith?

NJH Yes. I think it goes back to what we said about light.

JAT It is uncreated light as well as unapproachable light, so that what is creation is distinct from what He is dwelling in. Created light and uncreated light are two different things.

NJH Hymn 20 refers to uncreated light. There must be a link. We cannot go outside what is created, nor can we go outside what is revealed. We are governed by these things in holy respect for God, and must remember we will always be creatures.

In John 13, "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". I left out everything negative in this scripture. We just want the impression that He is going out to the Father. Then in verse 3, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given him all things into his hands, and that he came out from God and was going to God". The Spirit of God gave us that. He knew what was in the mind of Christ. At this point the Spirit of God is telling us what was in the mind of Christ. When we come to chapter 16, it is becoming light available to His own. In chapter 16 He says, "I came out from God", v 27. Then He says, "I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father". Now that is light. He is speaking openly here. That is the desire of God, not only to enter into revelation, but to convey that to His own. He was not telling the world; Judas, as representing the world in its most awful form had gone out; and in chapter 16 Jesus is now speaking openly to His own.

PM How much it must have meant to His heart that He was going to the Father!

NJH Tell us what you understand by coming out from the Father in chapter 16: 28. He does not say that in chapter 13; He says it in chapter 16. It says He "came out from God and was going to God" in chapter 13, and that is still true in chapter 16. I wondered if it related to the actual revelation of Himself. He was not sent from heaven; He was sent as here. In other words, for these thirty years He was in seclusion. Apart from the time when He was twelve years old, He was in seclusion with His Father, and I wondered if there was not a touch there as He came into the world of testimony, especially to His own, and all these chapters, particularly 14, 15, 16 and 17, are to bring the knowledge of the Father to His own, and then He was going to return to the Father. But I would like to know if that was how you viewed that.

PM I think that is helpful, and does the utterance from heaven, "*Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight*" (Mark 1: 11) give character to that coming out?

NJH That was the difference. The idea of eternal sonship which came up in that reading we have referred to was taking that relationship in which He is as man back into the form of God, which could not be because the form of God implies equality, but His sonship is a relationship taken in manhood and, speaking simply, when Christ came into manhood and took up sonship, the Father had His place in relationship. Is that right?

JMcK Have we not been taught that the Lord moved into this relationship in view of revelation?

NJH Exactly. That is good. He immediately moved as coming into manhood. On you go. That helps.

JMcK I was thinking about the word “with” in chapter 1: “with a father”. That relationship does not reach backwards into a past eternity. It is something that He came into and continues in. There is a degree of mystery about it because it speaks, does it not, of “the Son of man who is in heaven”, John 3: 13? From one point of view He never left that.

NJH Exactly, and, as I have said before, we are indebted to what is on our bookshelves, but do not leave it on the bookshelves! Read a bit, and you will acquire a taste for reading. If you wait for a taste for it, you might be a long while. Read a bit and delve into these ministries! We are so privileged. Most of our brethren have not taken up - I am speaking about our brethren in the world, not walking with us - that glorious privilege of the heritage we have in the books. These men of God worked out the truth in relationship with Christ and can carefully guide us through, and that is a bulwark to your soul, not to tread on error, which is very easily done.

GR Mr Darby does refer to the eternal Son, but the Lord has made the matter clear now.

NJH Well Scripture is final. The canon of scripture is the final writing, but ministry is cumulative. If you look back on Mr Raven, what he was often bringing before the brethren was the eternal *personality* rather than the eternal relationship.

JCG Do you think that these chapters from 13 onwards bring out the heart of God? The Lord is illustrating that He is intending us to approach Him in love. It speaks about “the Father himself has affection”, and then “ye have had affection for me, and have believed that I came out from God”. The indication is that the source is in mind that we should enter into what love is.

NJH That helps, and it comes back to what we said that the principle of revelation was with God in His relationship with Israel, but it was limited. To the individual, as we know, it was the Almighty, and it was covenant relationship. The name of Jehovah came in because He wanted it, but He had to wait for the beloved Son to be here, the Beloved, for the Father to be known, and that involves relationship of love. As you say, “the Father himself has affection”. It is love that is there, and it had to be in this One.

GCB Do you think that while what we have in John 20, “my Father and your Father” is wonderfully distinctive, we should value more than we do what came out in what the Lord uttered to his disciples before His death?

NJH Well, He came, as we have said, into the Father's bosom to make the Father known. That is what John says. It is very helpful, to make the Father known. He did that in John 20. “And will make it known” in John 17 obviously relates to John 20, what He would do: “my Father and your Father”, but that relationship stands in its integrity, the Father and the Son, throughout the gospel.

EOPM Behind all we are saying is the fact that the Father and the Son knew exactly what was involved in that revelation, involving how that love was going to be made known.

NJH That is very good; so not only was it the purpose of His love, but the counsel was involved too, His counsel, and the Father, the Son and the Spirit were in total unison that this was going to take place according to God's eternal purpose. I just thought in chapters 13 and 16 coming out from God reveals how great this Person is in manhood, and then going back in chapter 17: 5 to that place and presence. Coming out from the Father, I thought, related to the realm of revelation, chap 16: 28. He comes out from the Father and returns to the Father, and He is bringing light into the souls of His own as to who the Father was, and they would learn who the Father was in Christ. In John 17 He says, “And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known; that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them”. Is that not beautiful?

BWB Yes. It brings out the glory of a Man here who was intimately in touch with his Father in every detail.

NJH Yes, exactly. Mr Darby says in his Synopsis vol 3: p380 (footnote) that 'He has brought this love (of which He was the object)

down into the bosom of humanity, and placed it in the heart of His disciples'. Just think about that! Is that not beautiful? He was the object of that love and He brings it into the bosom of humanity - that would be in Himself, and then He lays it, He places it, in the affections of His own. Brethren, that is happening today, and should happen in this meeting. If anyone has a taste for the Father's love, Christ would make it known to you today.

DBB I wondered if that was the force of "will make it known". That is current.

NJH Well, it took place in John 20; we should allow things to be brought into our souls, and we need to be brought into it as well.

RMB "I have made known to them thy name" would cover His pathway on earth;

"and will make it known", would be John 20. There was a complete revelation of the Father before the Lord ascended, but your point is that from time to time the Lord would bring the Father into our minds and give us a distinct impression of Him.

NJH Would you agree with that? The revelation was complete in Christ. I am glad you have said until He ascended. But the light of the revelation is that He values it so much that He wants all of us to be brought and He brings the light of all that came out in Himself to come into our hearts.

CKR Would you say also that then He sealed it with the gift of the Spirit to retain it there at the height and level of the way it has come through?

NJH I am glad of that. Help us more, please.

CKR Between John 13 and John 16 you have the Spirit of truth referred to who "shall guide you into all the truth", John 16: 13. I just thought there was a beauty about the service of the Spirit that would retain it in our affections at the height and level that it has come out.

NJH The Spirit comes from with the Father; so He is bringing out, speaking reverentially, the full knowledge of the divine Person, but He witnessed the relationship of the Father and Christ when Christ was here, and then in glory the ten days, and the witness the Spirit brings is as from with the Father. He saw that blessed Man in the presence of His Father. I think we have said a lot. Ephesians 1 is the result of God coming out from His own side, moving as He has done and adapting it

to our creature condition.

RDP I was just thinking that John 17 is a completed work, “I have completed the work” (v 4), but then the bulk of the chapter is concern as to those that would remain. He uses a remarkable expression in verse 18: “As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world”. He links the sending forth of the saints with His own sending forth.

NJH That is good. You can see the need then for the inbreathing taking place and then the Spirit coming upon them in the Acts as a company. You can see all the wealth that was in mind that nothing may be lost. I think the Spirit of God would be urgent that nothing of the revelation of God in Christ will be lost. It will be stored in hearts. If not mine, it will be stored in the hearts of the saints.

RDP-r Do we get a sense of a purpose? I was thinking in John 17 it is “that” and in Ephesians it is “that we should be holy and blameless before him in love”, chap 1: 4. I wonder whether we see God’s purpose in the way that He has moved out in this way.

NJH Yes, you can see it written across the pages of Ephesians 1. I just noticed when it says, “marked us out beforehand”, Mr Darby says, 'When applied to persons, that to which they are destined is always added' (note 'd'). We are marked out beforehand for sonship. It is too deep for all of us, but let us take in something of it for the glory of God.

Birmingham

29th October 2010

List of Initials:-

T D Beveridge, Kirkcaldy; D B Bodman, Birmingham;
J T Brown, Edinburgh; R H Brown, East Finchley;
R M Brown, East Finchley; B W Burton, Taunton;
G C Bywater, Buckhurst Hill; H T Franklin, Grimsby;
J C Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; P J Herbert, Newport;
J McKay, Witney; P Martin, Colchester;
E O P Mutton, Walton-on-the-Naze; R D Painter, Yeovil;
R D Plant, Birmingham; G Richards, Malvern; C K Robinson, Glasgow;
J A Turner, Malvern; M J Welch, Newport; D J Willetts, Birmingham;
J Wright, Havering

CHRIST'S PLACE IN HEAVEN

Robert Taylor

1 Peter 3: 22

1 Corinthians 15: 27-28

John 17: 19-20

I was affected on Lord's day by the place that Christ has in heaven. His pathway of a few years on earth showed what man thought about Him. It says they "crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2: 8), the One who had been among them demonstrating divine love and grace, power and wisdom that could never have been, and never was, before. It says that God sent prophets and last of all He sent His Son. He said, "perhaps, when they see him they will respect Him" (Luke 20: 13), but that brought out man's heart. However fine we may think man is, or whatever progress he may have made, there is man exposed in his fulness. Paul says, "for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory". What grace in that statement, "had they known". That is how God in divine grace looks on men. Peter himself says, "ye did it in ignorance", Acts 3: 17. You can hardly think of that, you know. He fed five thousand, raised dead, opened blind eyes, and yet the grace of God says that they had done it in ignorance. Yet, if you look at the Scriptures you can see that it was Satan finding expression in men. We need to be careful about that, dear brethren. Satanic power is working today in men in these awful circumstances in the world, but Jesus has been received up in glory. What an answer to what man has done, that He was raised by the glory of the Father. Mr A J Gardiner often used to speak about God passing by all those great men that had gone before, who lay in death, but He raised Christ and Him alone by His glory. What an answer to what man had done! And men today, all they know about Christ is that there He died, on the cross. What happened next is a secret matter in some sense, but well known by believers. So Peter tells us; he was very clear about it all. He had looked on an empty tomb, but he knew something about this that we read about that He has "gone into heaven." We have been reading in the beginning of the Acts, and you can see there the effect of Him having gone into heaven. At that first preaching there were three thousand souls converted. There is the effect of Him having gone into heaven. Those early chapters of the Acts show the great demonstration of divine grace and power of a Man having gone in.

The first scripture we read speaks of that, "the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels

and authorities and powers being subjected to him". Peter experienced that as he was sleeping in prison and about to be killed on the morrow, and what happened? An angel smote him and said, "Rise up quickly", and as he walked along that path the very gates opened, Acts 12: 7, 10. The guards were like dead men. There were angels "subjected to him", and we can see that throughout history. We can see it in our own histories if we care to ponder by the Spirit the activities of divine grace, angels, authorities, powers being subjected to Him. He will act soon to put things all in their place, the troubles in the east, and all these things. And then will be the beginning of the millennium, but in the meantime, His great service is what we have in John, "I sanctify myself for them". The Lord Jesus is worthy to reign. He will reign. It says,

Kings shall fall down before Him
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing. (Hymn 36)

What a day that will be! What an answer to a pathway of shame! Isaiah says "the trees of the field shall clap their hands", Isaiah 55: 12. He is using that language because he could not find any better way to describe it. The Spirit uses this language. Think of the whole universe vibrating in joy and harmony and hallelujahs to the One who has come to put things in their place. But in the meantime we have this word; He says, "I sanctify myself for them". He did it for the twelve. You see the service that they experienced in the Acts, Peter and John; and then Philip - think of that Ethiopian being converted and many others, but then it says. "but also for those who believe on me through their word". That is our very selves, dear brethren, "those who believe on me through their word; that they may be all one". What an objective the Lord has for us. What divisions there may be in our own hearts and our own circumstances, but there is the Lord serving patiently. If you look back on your own history you have to say. 'How patient He has been, what grace'. In Acts 13: 18 the Authorised Version says, "about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness". I feel that is just what God has done with us, dear brethren, with me at least, He has suffered my manners, He has waited in grace. That is part of the sanctifying Himself for us, "I sanctify myself for them that they may be all one". He is patiently serving that He is going to have this. It will not be the church recovered publicly yet. Yet there will be something on this earth that is the expression of His service of sanctifying Himself for them, "that they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee

... that they may be one, as we are one". Let us have some sense of the divine objective, that He is seeking to have this. As I say, it will not be a public demonstration of unity, but may it be seen more and more; in small local companies, it may be, but let us observe that that is the divine objective, and He has given us the resources, dear brethren, that it may be effective. One of these things, He has given us is grace to repent. Repentance is a wonderful thing, to be able to repent and see how we, each one of us individually, have proved that He has sanctified Himself for us. It refers to His priesthood; it refers to His advocacy. Oh how wide and glorious that has been. It says that if we sin "we have an advocate with the Father", 1 John 2: 1 AV. What a place to have an Advocate, Jesus Christ; not in any High Court of Britain or any place else, but you have an Advocate "with the Father". As Advocate He is somebody who takes up your case and says, 'Here they are, I know them. It may be they have done this or done that, but I know them', and He refers to the work of God in each soul, and as we confess our sins He is righteous to forgive. That is the service of the Advocate. The High Priest then would restore you to your full vigour because, while the Advocate would clear your conscience, the High Priest shows you your place on the breastplate, the place you have in divine affections. Well, that is all part of Christ's service.

That comes between these other two scriptures I read. On the one hand He has gone in, and this is how He is serving. Later on He will come out and, as I said, He will put everything in its place. What a day it will be. It says, "Then the end". That is going to be the end, the great result of Christ having gone into heaven will be that He will take up things on the earth and bring them all in subjection to God. What a time it will be, dear brethren, but we have the light already of our eternal home. The rapture will be long before this, and that is one of the great secrets that the assembly has, that before all these things there will be the taking of the church, the assembly, the bride, the wife, to be with Christ, for ever with Him. And she will be with Him, in some of these subjecting matters that take place; the assembly will be employed mediatorially, but it says "the end" when everything will have been placed in subjection to Him. What power He has to do it! What authority He has to do it! He has shown that He alone has the authority and power to do it, and He will hand over everything to God. Well, as I said, the assembly has the light of the eternal day as no family really has had before, "that God may be all in all". What a result! Well, that is the result, dear brethren, of Christ having gone into heaven.

May we open our hearts more to know something of His grace

and to have in our hearts in a deeper way the great objective He has, and may we more fully appreciate His service. For Christ's name's sake.

Kirkcaldy

18th April 2011

TODAY

Derek G Coull

Proverbs 27: 1

Hebrews 3: 7 (from 'To-day') - 8 (to 'hearts')

Luke 18: 35-43

I had an impression this morning as we came together as to what we anticipate, what we think about in view of tomorrow, or the next day, or next year. Things may be in our minds that we may look forward to. No doubt we all have things that we look forward to, things that we think about. Maybe you wish the preaching was over and you could go home and do what you want to do, maybe playing the latest computer game, or maybe a game of cricket, or whatever it may be, or spending some time reading a book that interests you. Some of us may be thinking about our work tomorrow, and the challenges that may face us in the days ahead. Some of us may be thinking about what may befall us, maybe as a result of illness or some concerns that we have in life. We all think about these things. But what if tomorrow does not come for you? It is a solemn, sobering thought. We mentioned in the reading today one person whom we all know who is lying in a state in which you would not expect him to recover. It is not a nice thing to talk about, not a nice thing to think about, certainly not a nice thing for his family to think about. He might be in a position where he might be expected to die. You might not feel that way about yourself. I am not seeking to terrify anybody, but none of us knows. This proverb was written, and it says, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day will bring forth". None of us knows what the next day may bring forth. What is it going to bring forth for you? What is it going to bring forth for me? You might say that Lord's day night and Monday morning have happened many, many times before, and the likelihood is they are going to happen again.

But God has no desire for you to look into the future only in terms of things that may happen: He would like you to address matters now - not tomorrow, but today. Today is a very important day because the gospel is going forth: Jesus is being made available as a Saviour. I cannot promise you anything about tomorrow because He might not be available as a Saviour tomorrow. We do not know. We do not know what a day might bring forth. The day might bring forth something that causes the gospel *not* to be preached tomorrow, the Lord Jesus *not* to be available as a Saviour tomorrow. None of us knows. But this proverb gives us a warning, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou

knowest not what a day will bring forth”. There is no man that can promise that tomorrow will come. There are those that have tried to promise that tomorrow would come, and to some of them God has spoken and caused that tomorrow never happened for them. That is a solemn matter. But today God is offering in the glad tidings the opportunity for your future to be secure regardless of whether tomorrow comes for you or not. Now that is a future that man cannot offer you, but it is a future that God can offer. Only God Himself can offer it.

Where we read in Hebrews it says, “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”. “To-day if ye will hear his voice”: whose voice is that? It is the voice of Jesus, crying out; God's voice, you might say, in the glad tidings, “if ye will hear his voice”. You might ask, 'Why would I need to listen to His voice?'. Well, He has something very important to tell you, something very, very important, something that He might choose not to tell you tomorrow, but He has chosen to tell you today “if ye will hear his voice”. You might say, 'I would rather listen to something else. I do not really want to listen to His voice'. Some men said, 'Tomorrow is another day'. "We will hear thee again also concerning this", Acts 17: 32. Some men got the opportunity and said, 'We are too busy'. One said he had married a wife and could not come; another man said he was busy with his work; and another man said he was busy with some land; and when the next day came these men never had another opportunity, Luke 14: 18-20. But this scripture says, “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”. So He has something important to say to you, and the important thing that God has to say to you involves your never-dying soul; it involves your sinful state; it involves your blessing; it involves your salvation; and it involves where you will spend eternity. These are vast matters. These are tremendous things. But God wants to speak to you about them, and He wants to speak to you about them today. It says, “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”: that is, you might hear what He says and you might harden your heart to the point where you might refuse His offer in the glad tidings. What a terrible thing that is to think that if God would speak and offer you something you might refuse it. God is seeking to draw attention to His own blessed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, this man that we have read of in Luke's gospel was blind. I suppose that could be like you and me. You may not see your need. You may be wrapped up in your own little world, and you do not see your need, and you do not see any need for a Saviour. Well, God would seek to give you sight by faith in Jesus to see your need. That is something

that God can give, and God only can give. No-one else can give you it; God Himself can give you it. He would seek to draw attention to the fact that you are a sinner. That is the first thing He would seek to draw to your attention, that you are a sinner, and, as a sinner, you need a Saviour. That is a tremendous thing. If you could just see that, that you are a sinner! You might say, 'What right do you have to tell me that I am a sinner?'. Well, just look inside yourself, look at your own heart, look at your wayward ways, look at your disobedience, look at the wickedness of your own thoughts, and I have to tell you, dear friend, that you are a sinner; and God would seek that you might see that you are a sinner, and, as knowing that you are a sinner, see the need for a Saviour.

As you come to that, the Lord Jesus Christ is offered to you as a Saviour where you cannot save yourself. The Lord Jesus Christ is offered as a Saviour for sinners and, as the hymn-writer says, and as each one should know, that He is 'Saviour of sinners like me' (Hymn 122). Can you say that, dear friend, that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Saviour? You might say, 'Why should He be my Saviour?'. Well, dear friend, because you are a sinner and God finds you unacceptable before Him. As a sinner, He finds you unacceptable, and He has found a Saviour, found one Man who was acceptable, and He found this acceptable Man in the Lord Jesus Christ. He was so acceptable to God and God gave Him up as a sacrifice for sin. He sacrificed His own Son for sinners in order that He should have a perfect sacrifice, a perfect answer for sin and, in so doing, He said, 'I now have a Saviour, and I will offer Him to every single man'. What a wonderful matter, and He is offering Him to you today - not tomorrow, but today. He offered Him to me one day, and I accepted Him as my Saviour. I came to know what it was to have my sins forgiven, taken away, washed away altogether in the precious shed blood of Jesus. Do you know that for yourself? The Lord Jesus Christ in His love, when He was sacrificed, went there and He hung upon the cross, and He gave Himself a ransom for all. Think of those three hours of darkness when the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon the cross, and God poured out all His wrath in relation to sin on the head of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had that been you, had that been me, if God had asked us to answer for one sin that we had committed, we could not have sustained it. It says, "For the wages of sin is death", Rom 6: 23. Sin has come in, and death therefore is the penalty. No man has lived for ever. Every single man dies, evidence that sin is alive. In this world sin is alive and every man perishes and the Lord Jesus Christ, as the perfect, sinless Offering, became the propitiation for the whole world. The believer can say that He exhausted the judgment of God to His

entire satisfaction, and God, therefore, can say, 'I have a Saviour in Jesus, and I can offer Him to you as the complete answer for your sins'. He was sinless. He did not need to answer for His own sins: He had no sins to answer for. Whose sins did He take? He took my sins and He took the sins of all who trust Him, as God meted out that judgment. And not only that, as He hung there upon the cross, He cried, "It is finished", John 19: 30. Think of those wonderful words: "It is finished". What had He finished? He had finished the whole work to God's entire satisfaction. Then the soldier came and pierced His side and it says, "and immediately there came out blood and water" (v 34), and that blood, dear friend, that was shed can cleanse from all sin, and if you put your faith in His finished work and in that blood today, you will know what it is to be freed from your sinful state.

Now, this man was blind, but it says "when he heard the crowd passing, he inquired what this might be. And they told him that Jesus the Nazaraean was passing by". This man understood the urgency of the moment. The Lord was passing by. Dear friend, the Lord is passing by today. It might be the last day He passes by. This man probably knew that if the Lord was on His journey, He might not come this way again; that gave the urgency of the moment, and so it is today. It is urgent, urgent that you come to know Jesus because He might not pass this way again. He was passing by. "And he called out saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." Think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who could extend mercy. This man had a definite need. Yes, he had a definite need and so do you, dear friend. You have a definite need, and the sooner you come to realise it the better. You have a definite need, but, oh the wonder of the story, there is someone that can meet that need. This man knew it and he cried out, "Son of David, have mercy on me". He knew there was no other way, and I can tell you today, dear friend, there is no other way, no other way to salvation. There is only one Man. Scripture says that, "for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved", Acts 4: 12. There is no other name; there is no other way; and this man grasped that.

"And those who were going before rebuked him that he might be silent; but *he* cried out so much the more, Son of David, have mercy on me." What happened? It says "And Jesus stood still". He stopped. He heard the voice and He stopped. If you cry out to Him tonight, He will hear your voice and He will stop for you. He will, Himself. He does not send anybody else to do it when you cry out to Him. If you go to some of these big organisations and you want to speak to the chief

operating officer or whoever it may be, he might send one of his minions, he might send his PA, or whoever it might be. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself listens and He will have to do with you personally. This man cried out and the Lord stopped and it says He “commanded him to be led to him. And when he drew nigh he asked him saying, What wilt thou that I shall do to thee? And he said, Lord, that I may see”. The Lord might say to you tonight, 'What do you want from Me?'. Cry out, 'I need to be saved. I need a Saviour. I cannot save myself. I need a Saviour. I need my sins forgiven'. Cry out to the Saviour. He is the only One who can do it, and He will do it for you, personally. No one else could do it. He does not send any other agency. He does not send an angel; He does not send any great personality of this world; He does it Himself. And the Lord Jesus Christ says to him here, “See: thy faith has healed thee”. What is this word “faith”? God would give it to you as you cannot see for yourself. It is not something we can see naturally. It is not something that we have the ability to grasp hold of naturally, but God in His goodness is so great that He gives us the ability to see it. He gives us faith, that is, that we can see what God is offering and we can understand it and lay hold of it for ourselves. Such is the greatness of the gift of God that He would give you the gift of faith that you might see it for yourself.

“And Jesus said to him, See: thy faith has healed thee. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God.” You might say, 'I know my sins forgiven'. Are you a follower of Jesus? Are you? Do you find yourself as a follower of Jesus, interested in what He is doing? You might say, 'I am interested in what He has done because He died for me and I am going to spend eternity with Him when He comes for me'. Well, what about just now? Are you interested in what He is doing? Are you following Him? We spoke in the reading today about the fact that the Lord is not actually here. Well, He is not, but His body is here, that is there is a company of persons here who appreciate Him, who love Him and want to be here for Him, want to hear His current speaking, want to see His current movements, want to be with Him, want to enjoy Him, in view of another day when He is going to reign, who want to give Him His rightful place. Are you amongst them? Is that your life? Are you a current lover of Jesus and one who enjoys His company? You might say, 'I would like to be'. Well, if you would like to be, commit yourself to Him wholeheartedly.

What a matter it is to be a follower of Jesus, not a part-time follower, not one who is just there some of the time, but a follower of Jesus! It says “he ... followed him”. It does not say he stopped

following Him, or his affections waned or anything like that. It says, “he ... followed him”. Commit yourself, dear friend, as a lover of Jesus! Commit yourself to Him! You might say, 'How can I do that?'. Well, He has asked lovers to do one thing. He has asked us to remember Him in the breaking of bread. Think of that, an opportunity currently to call Him to mind, an opportunity to enjoy His love currently and, not only that, but to make a public testimony to the fact that you are here for Jesus. What a wonderful opportunity there is in that. You might say, 'Well, I do not know if I am able for that. It might bring reproach. People might wonder who I am, where I go. I do not know if I am able for that. Going to school people might ridicule me. Persons might say things to me that I do not feel able for'. Dear friend, commit yourself and depend upon Him and His power and His current ability to help you and to sustain you, and you will find that there is blessing in it. Persons found that there was reproach. We have spoken about that already today as well. There may be reproach in these things. If you show your true light and say, 'I am a lover of Jesus, I have committed myself to Him, I am going to be with Him eternally and I want to be with Him now in what He is doing', you may shine your light and others may frown upon it. They may tease you and do whatever they want to do to you, but, dear friend, you will find that you can be sustained in this pathway because the Lord Jesus Christ can help you in it and, not only that, but there is available to you the gift of the blessed Holy Spirit to sustain you as a believer and as a lover of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the Spirit? The Spirit is God Himself. God has given of His own Spirit, and He has put something in the believer. Any lover of Jesus who asks for the gift of the Holy Spirit, God grants it, to those who obey. The scripture says, “the Holy Spirit also, which God has given to those that obey him”, Acts 5: 32. So if you want to be here as a lover of Jesus, and if you want to be here for Him in the time of His absence, ask for the blessed gift of the Spirit, and God will grant you the gift of the Spirit. He will help you and sustain you. It says He will come and dwell in you. That is, there is an environment in the believer, an environment in man, woman, boy or girl that, using human language, is sterile, is perfect, is pure, is there for the divine pleasure, and God is free to put His Holy Spirit there, resident in the believer, in order that He might be available to you as a real and living power, available every day of every week. He is available all the time. If you cry out to Him in your need in the night; if you cry out to Him in your need in the day, whenever it may be, wherever it may be, the blessed Holy Spirit is available. It speaks as to Him as the Comforter. Think of that! You might not know if you are

able for the Christian pathway. It is difficult; it is hard in one sense; but the blessed Holy Spirit is available as a Comforter all through the time of the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He wants to be with you, wants to help you. What a wonderful thing, therefore, the love of God is in all its detail, and God is saying all this is available to you today.

So, dear friend, have you heard His voice? Have you? Have you hardened your heart, or have you opened your heart? It is quite a solemn thing to think of it in the light of the fact that nobody knows what tomorrow may bring; if you harden your heart, you might not get another opportunity. God may say today is the last day there is ever going to be for you. He may decide this dispensation will end tomorrow. God has that ability, and He *will* do it one day. He has made that promise already. It says that the Son does not know the time, but the Father knows the time (Mark 13: 32), and He has *appointed* that time. Make no bones about it, dear friend! The time has been appointed. If you drive a stake into the ground and you start walking towards it, and you get closer and closer and closer, there is a point when you are going to arrive at it and you are going to be able to touch it. That is like God setting the time. He has *appointed* a time. You and I know what time is: it moves on and it moves on and it moves on and it moves on. God has appointed a time when the present time of grace will end. It has been appointed. It might be tomorrow; it might be tonight. Who knows what tomorrow may bring? I would say to you, dear friend, make sure of your soul's salvation, make sure that you know the Saviour, make sure before you walk out of that door this afternoon that you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and that you know Him for sure. That gives you certainty in your heart, and certainty in your soul, that when that appointed time comes and the Lord Jesus Christ comes from heaven to gather up all those who belong to Himself, you will be there. What victory there is in that! What surety, what certainty there is! Dear friend, do not miss it! There are those who have passed on before, who had the faith of this in their souls: they also are awaiting that time, that glorious shout. The dead in Christ will hear His voice. Think of the power that is in that voice! The dead in Christ will hear it. Dear friend, you are not dead yet, "the living who remain", 1 Thess 4: 17. Think of that voice, you are among "the living who remain". Will you hear His voice? If you have not accepted Him as Saviour, that voice will pass you by. Just think for a moment; if that voice were to pass you by, where would you be? A Christ-less eternity, no Christ in your life, sins not forgiven, where are you going to go? What is going to happen? There is one place God has appointed for all those who reject the Lord Jesus

Christ as Saviour and they will all be banished to the lake of fire, an eternity of torment without Christ. Such is the portion of the unbeliever.

But it says, “To-day if ye will hear his voice”. What a wonderful matter it is that God is still speaking in love to your soul. That is what the hymn-writer says:

He's speaking from heaven in love to thy soul;
His blood He has given; wilt thou be made whole?
(Hymn 324)

You have the opportunity to be made whole today, dear friend, by what Christ has done, through accepting it for yourself. May God bless His word!

Buckie

22nd May 2011

NO REST HERE

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Hebrews 4

This life offers no rest at all; Christ has promised us afflictions, suffering, persecutions there, and not rest. When after labour, one waits for blessing and peace in this world, one finds devastation and war. The Holy Spirit, possessed by the Christian, produces activity in us instead of giving us rest in this world. Christ has not known rest here below; His apostles have been proved by all kinds of suffering; can we expect better? God gives us a rest above this world full of sin, and bondage, full of corruption; and Jesus has gone to prepare a place of rest for us, and to receive us there. Delivered from Egypt, the Israelites were not brought into the rest, but into the wilderness and into conflict with the enemy.

It is hard to find unending conflict around us, and that must always be appreciated as to the Hebrews, accustomed to hope for an earthly Messiah, and little used to the idea of a Christ hid in God. They did not find anything here below that they looked for, from the moment when they became Christians, for Christians leave the world without being yet in possession of heaven.

The effect of redemption is to put us in the wilderness, and there we find the proving of our flesh and of our hearts. We are subjected as men to the former by suffering. Our heart is proved to show us that we have nothing here below. We have only to expect the wilderness here and it is the only thing of which we will always be assured. If we wait for something else, we will either come to want to abide there or find tiredness and weariness. In the wilderness, we can only count on God.

The rest which is promised us is that of God. God has not yet entered His rest as to His creatures. He rested after the creation, because all was good, but sin has spoiled everything, and the rest of God as far as the creature is concerned has been interrupted. The Lord said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work", John 5: 17.

In resurrection, Christ rests in His work of redemption. He is seated now at the right hand of God and, as to our redemption, has nothing more to do; but it is only when God will gather all His people, that we enter into rest.

In Deut 8: 2-6, we are shown that God has brought us into the wilderness to humble us and to make us entirely dependent upon Him.

Moses, speaking of Israel, noticed this humbling fact which they constantly rebelled against; but God reached His end. He said, by the mouth of Balaam, that He had not seen iniquity in Jacob, Num 23: 21. After forty years, their clothes were not worn out, or their feet weary, Deut 29: 5. Perhaps, the daily effect of the love of God had been little felt, but at the end of the journey, the good He had done to His people was admirable. He had given them the manna, the water; the cloud to show them the way. The wilderness makes us feel our troubles more - the wilderness is hard for each of us, according to our character, and lays bare the object of our desires about the rest, about ambition, and so on. The wilderness shows that God is occupying Himself with all the details of our life; it is only the flesh which hinders our joy in the immediate presence of God.

The word of God and the priesthood of Christ (v 12-16) are given us to sustain us during the journey in the wilderness. The word is the principal instrument which God uses for our good; it gives us the knowledge of God and of ourselves. The natural man does not understand spiritual things. God uses what He finds in our hearts to make us know ourselves, and to reveal to us what we are - to penetrate into us and shine His light which manifests our troubles and our darkness. Natural affections become bad when they are not towards God; they are of the soul and not of the Spirit. The word penetrates to the division of soul and Spirit. The new man has nothing here below as an object; God is his sole Object. The Christian judges in his heart everything which does not accord with God; and the same Spirit which brings him to this judgment makes him understand that he will not have to be subjected to the judgement of God. The patience, support, tenderness of God cannot be known in heaven; it is only in the wilderness that we are able to know God in these different aspects. God ploughs our hearts to sow there the seed of His love. He is a Friend that we have learned in our troubles and in our afflictions; and who we will find again in heaven with a joy ever more living.

As to verse 14, we have a compassionate High Priest who has had experience of all our needs and who pleads our cause before God. He has been our Companion on the journey through the wilderness. This is why we are able to go before the throne of grace, which is no more a throne of judgement. The Holy Spirit is in our hearts to judge them, and the Father chastises us betimes; but He does not judge us any more.

May afflictions and the word of God have their full effect in our hearts, so that patience has its perfect work. Let us not prefer

consolation. If God proves us, it is to put in us a state to enjoy His love better. Wisdom for man is to submit himself with confidence; not with pride or insensitivity.

Translated from "*Le Messager Evangelique*"