

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD

John 1: 14-18; 17: 4-6

Acts 9: 17-20

2 Corinthians 1: 18-22

1 Timothy 1: 11

AM “The glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God”: that is the impression I have for these meetings. I would not say that in three days we could encompass “the glad tidings of the glory”, but I had an impression that we might speak together of the features of “the glad tidings of the glory”. I think if we look at the glad tidings in Scripture, we see that they develop. John the baptist came preaching the glad tidings of repentance, and the Lord Jesus preached the glad tidings of the kingdom: “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh”, Matt 3: 2; 4: 17. Those glad tidings do not change. They are gathered up in what is greater. When the Lord Jesus went on high, the apostles preached. Their preaching was largely to Israel, but they were glad tidings of repentance again in view of blessing, that God might bestow blessings down here. Peter preached that they were to repent “so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3: 19), blessings that Israel have yet to enjoy; and he presented a Man whom they knew. He presented the One who was here in lowly, suffering circumstances, who had walked the streets of Jerusalem, One whom they knew, and He said that *that* One has been made “both Lord and Christ”, Acts 2: 36. He is now in heaven, but we are here and we look for blessing, repentance being in order that blessing may come. That is a very precious feature of the glad tidings.

But then, in Acts 9, the apostle Paul was secured, and he had not known the Lord Jesus in flesh and blood conditions. He had not known that Man in humiliation down here. His encounter with the Lord Jesus was with a Man in glory, and we find that the glad tidings enlarged, increased: and “straightway ... he preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God”. That had not been preached before. He had been presented to man as “Lord and Christ”, but “*he* is the Son of God”. That is very suggestive of the greatness of Christ. It brings out not only the greatness of His person, but it brings out a Man who is the Centre of another realm for God, and He fills that place.

If we think of “the glad tidings of the glory”, what do they encompass? Well, I could not fully define it, but we know first of all that it means that God should be made known, and that He should be

glorified in the sphere of His own creation, and I thought that perhaps in this reading we might look at that. It also involves that He should be morally glorified, and this took place at the cross. It involves that man should be taken up, and that man should be glorified, that man should be brought into conditions suited to God's own presence, suited to Christ in glory. It means that God should have that in which He could rest, what He has set His heart on, His eternal purpose; and I wondered if in these four readings - we will see how we are led - we might explore these thoughts and seek to get profit and exercise in our souls as a result of it.

So in this occasion I thought we might see how God has come out and been made known. He has been made known in His Son. That must be so. He was not fully made known in the Old Testament. Various attributes of God were made known, but He was made known fully in His Son. All that could be known of God was made known: "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him". There was nothing lacking that could be known of God that was not declared by Jesus.

In chapter 17 of John he says, "I have glorified *thee* on the earth". He had accomplished everything that God looked for. God was glorified in one blessed Man upon the earth. How great He is! And then He says, "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me": made Him known. Not only has God been made known, but God has been glorified where everyone has come short of His glory. In Acts 9, Paul preached "the Son of God", One who fills another sphere. In 2 Corinthians He enlarges on it. He says, *that* One is the assurance of everything for God: "in him is the yea, and in him the amen, for glory to God by us".

I wonder if there might be profit if we pursue this line.

GJR I follow it with great interest because I am not sure that I could define what these glad tidings are. I am interested in what you have said as to what expands. It is not left behind, but what expands, and in this verse where you have begun in John's gospel, it is a Man here for God's pleasure who is preached, but it is actually an exposing truth.

AM Go on. Say some more about what you have in mind by 'an exposing truth'.

GJR Simply to preach the Lord Jesus here for God's pleasure in manhood, which is true, would not constitute glad tidings for men.

AM That is right. It exposes men. Man is seen for what he is. Here we have the Lord Jesus coming into manhood. John presents Him in the greatness of His Person: “And the Word became flesh”. This is not a presentation exactly as we get in other places of the lowliness of the incarnation; this is the majestic movement of a divine Person who took this step into manhood: “the Word became flesh”. He entered into the condition of man in order that in their circumstances He should glorify God and make God known. “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated his glory ...)”. It is the glory of relationship here.

JAT The first verse of hymn 133 is beautiful:

O the wonder of the moment!
God outshining from above
To secure a scene of glory,
All responsive to His love.

It is beautiful, is it not?

AM It is beautiful and it starts with God, and the glad tidings start with God, “the glad tidings of the glory”. It is what is for God, what is secured for God, but it all starts with God, and it started with a divine Person making this movement. In Hebrews we get that reference: somebody said that the veil was lifted from that which took place in heaven between God and the One we know as the Word (Synopsis vol 5 p230). He says: “Lo, I come ... to do, O God, thy will”, chap 10: 7. It was His own act; He came into manhood; the initiative was His.

GJR The word that Moses had was, “I have come down”; “I have heard their groan, and have come down”, Acts 7: 34.

AM God presented Himself to Moses in relation to the needs of His people, but as soon as they were extricated, Moses realised the greater end: “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance”, Exod 15: 17. It is what was for God.

APD What you refer to in John's gospel was not a momentary visit; it was dwelling. What would you say about that?

AM What days they were when He was dwelling here! There were those who said, “where abidest thou? ... and they abode with him that day”, John 1: 38, 39. They saw the circumstances in which He dwelt, what suited Him. They would have had some impression of One who was living here, whose source of nourishment and joy was not in the

things of earth, but who lived in relation to the Father. What do you say?

APD I suppose dwelling would be a sense that God was committed to securing a race for Himself, do you think?

AM Yes, that is good, because God had appeared in Old Testament times. He appeared to Abraham in the form of a man, but this was not like that. This was something completely different: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us". For thirty three and a half years, the Word was here, God was here in Christ, dwelling. He had taken His place among men.

MJW Would one of the first features of glory be grace? You get here "grace upon grace". You get "grace and truth" as though the front line of glory is grace, but then truth is all that God is, shining out. It is light, but grace is particularised. Is that an important feature of glory?

AM Well, it is. Grace is applicable to every circumstance. Truth is established; truth is truth; and that is absolute. It is established once for all. But grace continues, going on, whatever the circumstances, and it is a wonderful feature of God that He should be made known in this way by One who was "full of grace and truth". Full of it! Whatever came out in the Lord Jesus "grace and truth" were there.

DJW In Luke 2, the announcement is made in connection with a babe lying in a manger. "glad tidings of great joy", chap 2: 10.

AM That is right, and the heavenly host saying, "Glory to God in the highest", v 14. God was securing His eternal glory and it depended upon that Babe in a manger. He was establishing peace in that One: "and on earth peace, good pleasure in men": He would have it in men eternally, but it was established in that One. His pleasure was in men.

PM In coming into this condition, did He bring everything that was required? He was not dependent on what had gone before. He honoured it; but He brought everything that was required for man to come to know God in a way that never could be before.

AM That is right, so it is "his fulness" that we have received. It is what was in Him. He was not dependent on what had gone before. You get throughout John's gospel those who were dependent on the law and they were harking back to it all the time, and the Lord says, "and ye will not come to me", chap 5: 40. He brought everything with Him. It was all in Him. Everything was embodied in one blessed Man.

DMC What do you think prompted the disciples to give Him this title, “the Word”?

AM I suppose they really came to it that everything as to the knowledge of God, was expressed in Him. He was the expression of everything. The whole mind of God for them was in Him, but you have obviously been thinking about it.

DMC Well, they would have heard so often “at thy word” in His dealings with men and the work that He did, and His word was effective. It still is, is it not?

AM That is right, and Peter proved that early. He said, “Master, having laboured through the whole night we have taken nothing, but at thy word ...”, Luke 5: 5. Luke brings in the title “the Word” as well as John. I suppose amongst other things “the Word” conveys that He must be listened to.

RDP-r Does it link with Hebrews 1, “the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”, v 3. I was just thinking that everything that God is was shining out in that blessed Man. It goes on to speak of “the word of his power”.

AM Yes, “upholding all things”.

RDP-r I wondered whether perhaps you could give us some expansion on the thought of what glory itself is.

AM Well, glory by its very nature is beyond definition, is it not? It is outshining, all that God is in the outshining of Himself. That is glory. But it is what we are brought into. I have often been affected by the hymn:

The whole vast scene of glory bright,
(the outshining of God),

Subsists entire for Thy delight (Hymn 292).

It is what is of God, shining out in which He finds His pleasure.

RDP-r So it has been said it is not a place. When we are brought to glory, we are brought to a condition that is the outshining really of what God Himself is, seen in men.

AM Look at Revelation 21! There is glory shining out. But what is it? It is the expression of God.

JW Can you say something about the relationship here? It is the relationship of love. The character of it is “an only-begotten with a father”, then it is One “who is in the bosom of the Father”. Can you say something about that?

AM Well, the way that John describes it is very profound. He had contemplated the Lord. It has been suggested that he was one of the two that went to the house to see where Jesus lived. “We have contemplated his glory”. It is as if John cannot fully describe it. He is saying that the closest description he can give is, “a glory as of an only-begotten with a father”, the closeness, the intimacy that John saw as he contemplated the relationship the Lord enjoyed with His Father. But then he goes on, “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father”. He has come into that relationship. That is a place He has taken in coming into manhood, and so He has glorified that relationship by coming into circumstances in which He could be the Son; Sonship is associated in scripture with His Manhood.

JW Is this the way God has taken to make known what is in His heart?

AM I think so. Yes, that is right. Really Christ was in His heart, but as coming into the relationship of sonship He has entered into a relationship in which men can have part. So that we too come into sonship, and that was what was in God's heart: part of His eternal purpose was to have man in sonship.

JAT So the incoming of Jesus has changed everything. The simple impression I have is that He was not changed by the circumstances, but He changed the circumstances; so His coming in changes everything.

AM So immediately the basis of man's relationship with God has changed. John says, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”. Until this time man's relationship with God had always been conditioned by the presence of sin, but One has come in “who takes away the sin of the world”. Now man's relationship with God is based on how he stands in relation to Christ.

LB Is that emphasised in the verse before we read, “not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God”? That is the sense of His coming in in relation to God's work so that man can come into this relationship.

AM It is “as many as received him”, v 12. They were born not according to nature at all, “not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's

will, but of God". It is a wonderful thing to see the brethren. You have this assurance in your heart that every one has been born of God, that there is something which owes nothing to nature, "not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God".

LB We were having locally as to Nicodemus, being born anew. Nicodemus could not understand what being born anew was. He speaks of entering a second time into his mother's womb, but the Lord was on a different line, John 3: 1-8.

AM He was looking at it from the point of view of man's will, but the Lord is saying there is a work that goes on that is entirely of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, unseen, unheard, except by those in whom it takes place; and you realise there is a stirring of heart, you are feeling after God, and you are feeling after Christ, and that is a precious thing.

APD Are these the attributes of God coming into expression, but also and particularly His nature, which is love?

AM That is right. Did it not require His Son to bring out God's nature? I am glad you have drawn attention to that.

APD The thought of glory particularly is the outshining of His love. Would you say that?

AM I think so. Everything is tied up with His love, is it not? Grace displays His love active in relation to His objects, does it not? His love is behind it all and it was spoken about even in the Old Testament. Moses said to Israel, 'It was not because you were a great nation that God has taken you up; it is because He loves you', Deut 7: 7, 8. I can imagine that they probably did not understand that at all, but it has come into expression in a Man. It has come into expression in One who has glorified God.

DJW Is that why the expression used is "the only-begotten"? That is distinctive. The firstborn got everything in the Jewish economy. "The only-begotten" is exclusive to Christ Himself.

AM Yes, we are brought into that relationship, but He was begotten, not in a past eternity, it would be derogatory to say that. But coming into manhood, He is spoken of in Scripture as begotten.

DJW The "we", is that the twelve?

AM Well, I suppose especially it would be. They were there with the Lord. What do you say?

DJW I have the impression the twelve talked together and asked, 'What really has remained on our spirits of what we enjoyed with Him?'. And this is what they came to, "an only-begotten with a father".

AM When I was a lad a brother asked, 'Why does John not give us the mount of transfiguration?'. He said that he thought that John gives us what is greater than the majesty of the mountain - "the bosom of the Father".

RB Is John really speaking from the standpoint of seeing the whole glory shining "in the face of Jesus Christ", 2 Cor 4: 6?

AM I think you are right. He had seen the glory. It was not a glory that repelled him; it was a glory that drew him. He knew what it was to be in the bosom of Jesus. He knew what it was to enter into the glory.

DJW In John's view, contemplators get the best. Say something as to that. We have to set ourselves. It does not just happen.

AM Contemplating, and sharing what you are contemplating: I think that is a valuable thing to do practically. I might just say that I have gained a lot by sharing impressions with brothers. If you share impressions, you gain impressions of Christ. I like what you said as to the twelve. They would have spoken about Him.

AEM Do you have an impression as to what it meant to the Father to see this glory shining in a place other than heaven?

AM Well, that was the Father's joy, was it not? We see it at the Lord's baptism, for example, He came up out of the waters of baptism. It was as if heaven could not contain the joy in seeing Christ down here, that there was One who was glorifying the Father. He says later, "I have glorified *thee* on the earth". He was here in the supreme satisfaction that the Father was satisfied with Him, and think of the Father's joy, as having seen the earth for four thousand years given up to man's will, and now there was One here upon the earth, glorifying Him. Say some more. You have an impression.

AEM Well, I do have an impression that there were no glad tidings of the glory before this happened. There are now glad tidings at the incarnation (Luke 2:10), and the joy for the divine affections and for the divine heart must have been beyond what we can say.

AM That is right; so the glad tidings must be centred in a Man, a Man who was here in absolute perfection, displaying in perfect righteousness and goodness, truth, grace and love all that could be

known of God; displaying it here! God delights in seeing the display of Himself. Go back to Genesis 1: "Let us make man in our image", v 26. God has a right to see Himself displayed. It is one of the great failings of man that he wants to see *himself* displayed, but God has a right to do so, and He rejoices in seeing what speaks to Him of Himself and He saw it perfectly in Christ.

QAP In this gospel, the Lord Jesus says of Himself, "He who comes from above is above all" (chap 3: 31); and in John 6, "the bread which has come down out of heaven", v 58. Is your thought that the glad tidings of the glory are really set on in Him?

AM That is right. It must be so, must it not? There is One who has secured everything for God and who Himself was the epitome of all that God had sought; it was all set out in Him. No wonder the Father could express His joy in Him. No wonder He would intervene when somebody, well-meaning but with a confused mind, would place Him alongside Moses and Elias, Matt 17: 4. No wonder the Father would intervene and say, 'This One, this is the One who is to be listened to'. He does not stand alongside any other. He is distinct.

PM You get the reference, "On this account the Father loves me", John 10: 17. The Father could not help but love Him. I think someone has said that He could not take His eye off Christ.

AM That is good, and later in the gospel you get the Lord's own words, "Father ... I knew that thou always hearest me", John 11: 41, 42. What the Father heard was all pleasing to Him. There was nothing that needed adjustment. If I could quote Mr Darby: 'The hand that struck the chord found all in tune', Synopsis vol 1 p118. There was nothing discordant in the life of Jesus.

JW Is this helping us to view the glad tidings from God's side, not just from my side?

AM Exactly, and this is my exercise. "The glad tidings of the glory" are really the glad tidings from God's side. It is what He has set out, what He is securing for His own pleasure. Now, my need is met in it and that is wonderfully blessed and we can be very, very thankful that in these days we hear the basic gospel preached. It is a wonderful thing, and may it continue to be preached, but it is in view of what is for God.

RDP "The glad tidings of the glory" is not the glad tidings of a work, but of a Person. Is that the link with Paul really? John is very much linked with Paul in his thinking and the direction of his writings and so

on, and John is full of a Person. I suppose most of us begin with the work, the work that has been done, but the fulness of the thought is the Person.

AM And really God reaches us through that work, does He not? Through the work of new birth He makes us feel that we have a need. We know that we will have to do with God and how are we going to meet Him? How can we stand before God? That is the need in the soul that new birth brings about, and we feel after Christ and we find that in His work there is the answer to that need, the blood of Jesus has been shed, everything has been met. But the blood first was for God. It was to satisfy *God's* claims.

DJW Is that really the glory of propitiation, that God has been satisfied in regard of every matter by a Man who is now in His presence so that He *can* come out in blessing.

AM That is right and the only One who could do that was One who glorified Him on the earth. Who else could achieve that work?

RDP-r So as far as we are concerned, we have all “sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3: 23), but the glory of God is seen in this blessed Man, who is the answer to our need.

AM Yes, indeed. The glory of God shone out in Him and it still does. So Paul preached Him, “preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God”. That One who was once here is none other than the Son of God. He fills that sphere above and the glory is shining out.

RDP It seems it can be quite a quick progression from the work to the Person. I was thinking of the man in John 9. He had benefited from a work. Jesus touched his eyes and he received his sight and he comes into reproach, then the Lord seeks him out and says, “Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?” v 35, 36. He is moved from the work that had been done for him to the Person who was infinitely greater even than the work.

AM That man is a great lesson to us because he got his sight before he had even seen the Person. “He went therefore and washed, and came seeing” (v 7) and he could say a wonderful work has been done. There is something about the faithfulness of the Lord that would not leave a person without a touch of Himself and so He finds him and He presents Himself to him: “Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God?” There He is, the One who is the expression of God, all that can be

known of God. The Lord Jesus as Son of God expresses all that can be known of God.

RDP I thought that the Son of man has come into our circumstances. I suppose with many of us that is the way we have come. We have had a need and the need was met; but Paul preaches the Son of God and takes you, not only out of your circumstances, but even out of earth's orbit, because the Son of God is the One who is in relation to God. We are thankful for the way we have come, but this is the great opportunity and blessing of the glad tidings.

AM There were those on earth, such as Nathaniel, who were impressed with the greatness of Jesus here. Nathaniel said, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel", John 1: 49. That was an expression of His personal greatness here as a Man, but what Paul saw was a Man who appeared to him in glory, One who fills that sphere, who would take us out of this scene and hold us in relation to Himself in the scene in which He is.

BWB Was that the point of the taking up of Paul? John and Peter had served wonderfully, but the gospel of the glory required a vessel, one who had actually seen Christ in glory: "have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" 1 Cor 9: 1. And then what he saw as caught up, which he does not divulge in detail, surely lay behind his ministry, and you can see how the gospel of the glory demanded something further.

AM Now Paul's life here on earth, outwardly, was a suffering life, was it not? The Lord says, "I will shew to him how much he must suffer" (Acts 9: 16), but in faithfulness to His servant, the Lord gave him the view of the glory. First He gave him a view of the Person. He said, "have I not seen Jesus our Lord?". He did not see Him in the streets of Jerusalem; he saw Him in the glory; and then, as you say, he had that wonderful experience, the experience of "a man in Christ" when he "heard unspeakable things said which it is not allowed to man to utter", 2 Cor 12: 2, 4.

BWB Do the glad tidings of the glory lead to the truth of the mystery.

AM Yes, the "glad tidings of the glory" leads on to that. Paul speaks in Ephesians as to "the mystery of the glad tidings", chap 6: 19.

JAT Thus that work in all its glory
Every thought of God maintains,
While His grace o'er all has triumphed,
And through righteousness now reigns. (Hymn 133)

Is it not wonderful that the Saviour, who is glorious, and has brought us into the glory, was the One who “loved righteousness and ... hated lawlessness”, Heb 1: 9. I thought what a beautiful feature underlies the work of Christ. You could not get glory without a result. It has been said that the glory of God is the conciliation of His nature with His attributes, FER vol 4 p7. This involved the cross, I understand.

AM I am not sure that Mr Raven intended that to be a definition of glory. I think what you say is right; glory has been described as that. We can see that God's nature is love, but His attributes involve righteousness and holiness. How could they be reconciled with His love? But they are met together and that is the glory of God.

JAT Exactly, and is it the fact that we are attracted to Him in so many respects but He “loved righteousness, and hated wickedness”, Ps 45: 7. He is the One who has displayed that.

AM “Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy companions”. There was a moral basis for the glorification of Christ.

BCB Did the queen of Sheba experience “the glad tidings of the glory”? David demonstrated the glad tidings of grace, particularly to Mephibosheth. When the queen of Sheba came to Solomon “there was no more spirit in her”, 1 Kings 10: 5. She said everyone was happy; there was something shining out - 'I do not know what to say!'.

AM She came to something that was working, operating, and there was one man who was the head of it all. As you read that section, you are left with an impression, not just of enigmas being answered, but of a whole system of glory, centred typically in Christ, which is all for God's pleasure.

GJR It is not easy for us to move to the thought of what is beyond need. I am just thinking of this matter of glory and thinking of earthly glory. There is an earthly glory, which is not wrong but of a lower level, but if you think of what is associated with royalty and coronations and the like, and a coach that is covered in gold, is it needed? This glory works perfectly well without that. It is beyond need and it is for the pleasure and honour of the Centre.

AM Yes; God always works in relation to His glory, does He not? He will also meet our need in that. “But my God shall abundantly supply all your need”, not according to the level of the need, but “according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus”, Phil 4: 19. God's work is on the level of

glory, of His glory, and what is established in Christ.

DJW What do you say for our help that He puts this little word “full of grace”?

AM “Full of grace and truth”. Go on. You have an impression.

DJW The types will give us some aspect of it, but when you come to the “only-begotten” you come to what is there in its fulness. We sing sometimes:

All that shone in Christ, once humbled,
There expands in glory's light. (Hymn 83)

There is that which is there which is capable of infinite expansion.

AM That is right and there was never anything of man there. It is “full of grace and truth”. You can take what was seen in Christ and feed upon it, and we will eternally: “full of grace and truth”. Every grace that God looked for was there. The expression of God Himself, truth, was there, all in Christ, all embodied in one Man, and there was nothing else.

JB Does the way Paul was received by a brother in such affection show the subsisting of grace and truth?

AM I think that is helpful. I am glad you say that. When Ananias came, he said, “Saul, brother”. There it is; grace was there. But then, “the Lord has sent me”, the Lord is the One who must be obeyed. “The Lord has sent me, Jesus that appeared to thee in the way in which thou camest, that thou mightest see”. This was Saul's first contact as a believer with what was among the Lord's people here, and it was a gracious touch from a brother.

APD What was it that led Paul to preach that “Jesus that appeared to thee in the way” was “the Son of God”?

AM Well, that is really touching my exercise. It seems to me that he had known *about* the Man of the gospels, but suddenly he had an encounter with the Man in heaven, the One who fills that place, and that One was none other than the Son of God; and he lifts the whole level of the gospel immediately, does he not, to a Man who is in another world? It brings out His personal greatness but it also brings out the One who is the Centre of a world of things for God's pleasure.

DJW It is significant it does not say he preached the Son of God, but “he preached Jesus that *he* is the Son of God”.

AM Yes, “he preached Jesus” - it is the same One - “that *he* is the Son of God”. There is One who is the Centre of a whole order of things that is for the pleasure of God, the Son of God Himself. The One in whom God found His unbounded pleasure when He was here upon earth is now still the same blessed One, set on high, set in the presence of God, and He is presented to men in that position.

APD It is a beautiful name, Jesus. We realise how great He is, how great the Person is, 'Jah the Saviour'. That is something that must have burst into Paul's soul, opened up his soul, how great the Person was.

AM Do you think that, in those three days of intense exercise when he did not eat or drink and did not see (Acts 9: 9), he would go over these words, “*I am Jesus*”, so that he would come to it that it was no ordinary Man who had trodden the streets of Galilee here. That One was the Centre of a world for God's pleasure.

JAT Would this be a greater title than Messiah? Paul would have understood Messiah very well and his expectation of Messiah, and one is not in any way reducing that, but rather is this not a much greater thought?

AM Well, yes. Messiah was in relation to His earthly people. He would come in and restore the kingdom to Israel and so on. That is what they were looking for in Messiah, but the same blessed One is much greater. He could not be restricted to Israel. He has this title “the Son of God”. All that is for God's pleasure is bound up in Him.

JW Do you think God's thoughts for man are set out in the Son of God in the place where He is? It is not as He was here. It is the same Person, but God's thoughts are set out in Christ for men, are they not, in His present place of glory?

AM And that shows the importance of us having a living link with Him where He is. We speak to the children about the story of Jesus, and it is absolutely right that we do, and make them understand the way in which Jesus came and suffered and died and it was for our sins. But the other side of the gospel is that God is displaying in one Man what He is going to secure in many and that Man now has been exalted. He is the Son of God.

DMC The reference in Philippians, “Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name” (chap 2: 9), what would you say about that?

AM That is the place that God has given to Him in answer to the moral features that were displayed in Him down here. He glorified God down here. Features were seen in Him, features of obedience and subjection. We may speak some more about those later if we are left here. God in righteousness had to honour the One who so glorified Him here. He had to give Him the place of distinction and honour and, as in that place of glory, He is now available to all men. "The name of Jesus" (v 10) sounds out now, does it not?

BWB Do you think the reference earlier to Stuart Price's hymn helps again? The final line is:

God outshining in His Son!

You cannot go beyond that. There is a fulness of glory in it and it is obviously the divine end in view in the gospel.

AM God outshining in His Son! How could it be otherwise? It is wonderful and it is glorious, and our hearts rejoice in it, but how could it be otherwise? If God had shone out as to all His attributes in any other way, we could not have existed before Him, but He has shone out in His Son. He has come so close in that way, shone out in order to secure what was in His heart as it is manifested in His Son.

RDP-r Is this known by revelation? I was thinking that Paul really got a revelation here, did he not, as to who the Person was? We only get the knowledge of the Son of God by revelation, do we not?

AM The principle of revelation enters into everything we receive, does it not? Paul's conversion here was special, I suppose. It was quite dramatic. Nevertheless the principle remains. There is a word which comes from above and it comes to me. You sit in the gospel preaching - I know we have often said this - and suddenly it seems as if there is no one else in the room: that word came to me.

RDP Someone spoke about the queen of Sheba and she came with enigmas, and I wondered if the enigmas that enter perhaps into a Christian's life link with the fact that they are trying to work out all that has come out in Christ in relation to a scene of things down here, and it is difficult therefore to find the answers. But when you come to the Son of God, when you come to His glory and come to another sphere of things, then the enigmas disappear because you realise that you were justified in the glad tidings, not for this scene, but for another one. You find that the unanswerable things that appear to come in in a believer's life down here, as to why evil continues and all kind of things, disappear

when you see that the fulness of the divine thought is not in relation to this scene but another scene and another Man.

AM Another Man in it; so the answer is in Him: "in him is the yea, and in him the amen". Everything is settled in Him. You have spoken about the questions that come into our minds and you might ask, 'How can God bring about what is pleasing to Himself?'. Paul would assure the Corinthians about this, that it is all centred in another Man in another world. So he preached "the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached by us among you (by me and Silvanus and Timotheus)". I suppose the three of them preached the gospel during the time they were in Corinth. He "did not become yea and nay". Some of the Corinthians were accusing Paul, and saying that he said he was going to come to them and then he did not come, that he would say 'yea' one day and 'nay' the next, and Paul explains all that in the section around these verses: that that was not the case at all, but that he did not come in order to spare them. But the preaching of the Son of God went out; "For whatever promises of God there are, in him is the yea" - and you can go right back to Genesis to find the promises of God and it is a profitable thing to do. Try writing a list sometime of all the promises of God and you will find that they are all centred in Him. There is One who has undertaken everything. "And in him the amen", that is, all is established in Him; the final establishment of everything is in Him.

APD Is there a distinction between the way John and Paul present the Son of God? John seems to present the greatness of the Son of God in His Person, but Paul the pattern of the heavenly race. Would you say that?

AM Yes, that helps. John is occupied with the greatness of the One he presents, the glory of the Son of God, and that is quite affecting because John's gospel was the last of the Scriptures to be written, we understand; so he had seen the days of the apostles. He had seen the decline come in; he had seen all in Asia forsaking Paul (2 Tim 1: 15); he had received the Revelation; he saw the state of Christendom and how it would work out even to our day. He saw it all working out like that. And what is his answer? He writes about the glory of the Son of God. Then he says, "these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name", John 20: 31. Even though he had seen total breakdown he writes like that. But Paul is taking us into another realm.

PM Is this to maintain a heavenly testimony in Corinth? They had

fallen to the level of man and were vying against one another, but he is writing here to maintain a heavenly testimony in relation to the One who is the Centre of another world.

AM Yes; so that is what has marked that One, a heavenly Man. Even when Jesus was here He was a heavenly Man. It was a heavenly life on earth. That is to be manifested in the saints now; it was to be manifested in Corinth, and it is to be manifested today.

MJW Why does he speak of the “promises of God”? Why did he not say the 'purpose of God' is “in him is the yea, and in him the amen”? .

AM Well, it is true as well that the purpose of God is secured in Christ, but in the promises God's purpose has been made known to man. He set out in relation to His earthly people that His mind for them was that they should live and that God should dwell in the midst of them. This is all part of His promises, and yet the people failed. You might have thought the promises of God had not yielded fruit, but they have because they have been established in one blessed Man.

RDP I read somewhere in relation to the “promise of life” (1 Tim 1: 2) that promise is usually to meet a need on our side, JT vol 55 p2. Purpose is a loftier thought, but all the promises are fulfilled in Him. The men and women of the Old Testament had promises and they did not see the fulfilment of them, except perhaps some way in spirit, but the promises are all in Him.

AM Well, you think of Moses, that great servant. It has been said he was a very full type of Christ, JT vol 17 p171. He may not reach the heights that David did, but he was the fullest, the great servant that he was. He did not get to the land, and yet he said, 'I see it now; there is another Man'. “Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken”, Deut 18: 15. The promise is centred in another Man.

QAP I have often wondered about the way Paul writes here. You might have thought it was enough to say “the Son of God”, but then he says, “Jesus Christ” and then he says “he” as though it is emphatic. He is speaking of a Person that he knows in a living way.

AM That is right, “the Son of God, Jesus Christ, he who has been preached”, none other, it is that blessed One.

PWB What do I need to be able to preach the glad tidings of the gospel of the glory, and to whom do I preach it?

AM I think what you need is a link with a Man who is the Centre of the glory, and love for Him and the heart filled with the glory of God's ways, the glory of God's thoughts, and the glory of the Man who is in God's presence.

RDP What we have received in the glad tidings is everything that God has to give: "for of his fulness we all have received": it is all there. We may not be aware of it. It may take a long time to realise it, but it is all there. Paul, of course, is distinctive. The Lord said to him through Ananias that he was to be "a witness for him to all men of what thou hast seen and heard", Acts 22: 15. That would not only be historical; that was to be current. Is that not one of the features of "the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God"? It is not only what happened in history, but it is current, the current movements and life of heaven.

AM Yes, and there is a divine Person here today who is preserving what is living, the Holy Spirit. He is the earnest. Paul goes on to speak about it: "Now he that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God, who also has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts". "The earnest": it is not just an impression, but it is the actual thing in a divine Person here to ensure that what is living is maintained.

RDP It is not without point that John is the gospel writer who introduces and develops the presence and power and activities of the Holy Spirit.

Malvern

23rd August 2013

Key to initials:-

R Bain, Buckie; L Bernard, Ormond Beach; B C Bodman, Bristol;
B W Burton, Taunton; P W Burton, Taunton; D M Crozier,
Warrenpoint; A P Devenish, Edmonton; J B Ikin, Manchester;
A Martin, Buckhurst Hill; P Martin, Colchester; A E Mutton, Witney;
R D Painter, Yeovil; R D Plant, Birmingham; Q A Poore, Swanage;
G J Richards, Malvern; J A Turner, Malvern; M J Welch, Newport;
D J Willetts, Birmingham; J Wright, Witney

ENDURANCE

Russell D Wallace

Proverbs 27: 1, 23-27

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 (to 'fails')

These scriptures came before me, beloved brethren, in view of this occasion. I read in Proverbs 27, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day will bring forth". Today we see around us failure because of men's boasting, which is not a feature we would expect to see in a Christian. Unfortunately we do; we fail, but what I had in my mind was that in the latter section that I read it says, "wealth is not for ever; and doth the crown endure from generation to generation?" Well, we know things have failed all round about us, and there is nothing that does not fail apart from what is in Christ and the work of Christ in its perfection. We have our young brother and sister before us today, and this occasion is specially set aside in view of ministry to come in and encourage. We are greatly encouraged with our young brother and sister. While we are sorry to be losing our sister from this locality we are glad that she is going to a locality where she will be able to bring into play all that she has learned. This particular verse was a word of advice that was given to me when I was first married, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day will bring forth".

One of the things that is prevalent today is man's desire for instant gratification: men are not prepared to wait for anything; but what I had before me was endurance. When you endure for something, it is not for what you get immediately but something which will come as a matter of exercise and maybe a matter of hard work, and this all enters into marriage. We see failure all in marriage around us, but this is not what I wish to concentrate on; I want to concentrate on what is said of Christ in Hebrews: "him who endured", chap 12: 3. If we consider what the Lord endured and the basis on which we are here, everything we have is in Him. The Lord endured: "endured the cross", Heb 12: 2. All those things the Lord endured in view of His own, maintaining and keeping His own. We can see these things as we look upon the saints, and look upon His work in them. We can see what has endured and, beloved brethren, I would like to speak to our young brother and sister to say that from today onwards they should bear in mind what we have in Corinthians, this great love chapter, which ends with. "Love never fails".

Now I want to assure you, dear young brother and sister, if you endure, endure in the things of the Lord, endure in the pathway, endure whether it be in material or whether it be in spiritual things, there will be a result at the end of it. Because it says here, "Love has long patience, is kind; love is not emulous of others; love is not insolent and rash, is not puffed up, does not behave in an unseemly manner, does not seek what is its own, it is not quickly provoked, does not impute evil". What a wonderful thing it is to read that and see what there is, and what there can be that is available to us. The desire when we enter into married life is to see and work out things together, and as you work out things together that bond will become strong, that bond will endure; and it is important that the bond endures. We have seen endurance so plainly and clearly in the Lord, how He endured right to the very end, and that is what He would desire that we do. We are to endure in our spiritual lives; we come up against a problem, and we are not to take the easy option but we have to endure. We have to work out things and see what is in view. And so, in life we see how things happen. I know in my own history there are things that I have had to endure, my wife has had to endure, we both have had to endure, but it says "Love ... endures all things. Love never fails". Remember that; in our lives we have love for one another, love for the Lord, love for the brethren. Our sister is going down to begin a home in the Bristol area, and what a wonderful thing it is to see homes set up for the testimony here, so that it may be maintained and kept, and so that there may be that enduring quality. That is something that has been seen in our young brother and sister, that they have endured already in their pathway. And for what is before them, I would encourage them to endure in view of the fact that, "Love never fails". Whatever else may fail round about us, "Love never fails". The Lord Jesus, even to His last breath, never failed His own. He could turn to that malefactor on the cross beside Him and say to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise", Luke 23: 43. Even in His extremity He endured in view of the fact there were those He was securing for eternity. Dear young brother and sister, endure in your lives together, both spiritually and materially that there may be a way through for the testimony here, and there may be that which is maintained in Bristol and kept for the Lord's joy and pleasure.

For His Name's sake.

JERUSALEM

Peter van den Berg Jr

Psalm 51: 18-19

2 Chronicles 33: 13 (from “And he”) - 14 (to “height”)

Nehemiah 3: 28-30; 7: 4; 12: 40-43

I have an impression of Jerusalem: what has been wrought in recovery. The walls of Jerusalem are generally only mentioned in view of recovery and in view of repair. It is good to see a repenting David speaking about building the walls of Jerusalem; then there shall be the right sacrifices; then there will be what is acceptable to Jehovah. We see how Manasseh, an evil king, prayed to Jehovah *his* God when he had been taken captive to Babylon. You never hear of Saul praying to Jehovah *his* God, or speaking about Jehovah *his* God, but Manasseh prayed to Jehovah *his* God (2 Chron 33: 12) and God turns his captivity. He returned to Jerusalem and he built the walls of Jerusalem to a great height.

In Nehemiah we get the recovery of a small part of the people to Jerusalem; a large part of the children of Israel remain in Babylon, as in our day, and we feel for them. The position is taken here in all humility; all the failure of the past has been gone over, but that does not deter, and all the attacks of the enemies do not deter. They say: “Even that which they build, if a fox went up, it would break down their stone wall”; ‘what are they trying to do?’ But here we find persons working on the repair. Especially today, when we celebrate the setting up of a household, we would like to think of the persons who repair the walls of Jerusalem “every one over against his house”. I was thinking of the importance of our brother and sister having the blessings of Jerusalem before them, not just the Christian life, but thinking of what the Lord has in mind collectively to be enjoyed, and what is collectively to be enjoyed is also to be protected, and needs building up, restoring and repairing. You do not just repair out of a legal sense of duty, but seeing persons repair over against their own house shows that they value their household and seek to protect and preserve it in the light of the assembly. Understanding and maintaining God's principles is what the wall is all about and that is also needed to protect the household. We need to maintain what is right before God in the midst of all that is against us. It may be good to think about the walls, and go over the history of the testimony, over the failures that have been in localities

and persons. All these things are needed to keep us dependent, but all that has happened is not to deter us because the result is that, when they had gone over it all, they all went from the wall to the house of God, and there is exceeding great joy. There is joy for the men, and for the women and for the children. That is the result of building on these things and maintaining them for God, in view of your own house, and in view of all the saints, so that the men and the women and the children rejoice with great rejoicing, and the shout of the joy of Jerusalem goes round about into the land.

How great what God has given to us in these days, what has been opened up and what has been restored. We all should have an active part in this: in maintaining and rebuilding what is for God's pleasure, so that we can enter the house of God. There is this great joy, and there are these sacrifices that David speaks of, sacrifices of righteousness. There the sacrifices will be accepted by God and there the answer to God can go up: there Zion can be enjoyed. God has chosen it; He says, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell", Psalm 132: 14. That is the side of Jerusalem that is not just practised administratively, but it is what goes up to God in the praises and the worship from the hearts of the saints that have been redeemed, that have been set free and that have come to this wonderful environment, not in any pride. In fact we say, 'The place is large and the inhabitants are few'. These truths are so wonderful you would wish all to come into the gain of them, and yet "the people in it were few". You feel that; your heart goes out to everyone. You do not say, 'Oh, we have made a cosy place for ourselves', but you say, 'Alas, the place is large and the inhabitants are few'. These truths are wonderful, they are great for everyone to enter into, but the inhabitants are few. We have to accept these things in our day, but may they not discourage us, and may our young brother and sister work on these things in view of maintaining them that they may be in the gain of the heavenly inheritance which is the great Christian blessing that God has in mind for us.

This does not only apply to households. You say, 'Well, we are always celebrating the household and the value of it', but I would just lastly refer to this one man, Meshullam, whose name means the 'friend', or the 'reconciled' one, who is "the son of Berechiah", which means 'blessed of Jehovah', who repairs "over against his chamber". That may be an unmarried person, a widower, or someone who left all his relatives in Babylon. He has his own chamber in Jerusalem. He has

decided for himself, 'I am going to live there, and work out maintaining these truths'. So this involves everyone: the households, the single persons, the widows, the widowers; everyone is involved in it. You may have your chamber in Jerusalem, just on your own, but you are in this collective blessing, you are in the greatness of God's thoughts. And the end in view is not just going over all the sad things of the past but "they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy; and also the women and the children rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off". May that mark this day, may that mark the lives of our brother and sister, and may that encourage all of us in view of the wonderful truth that God has given us, the wonderful enjoyment that He has opened up, the large place. May we have everyone in mind to bring them into this great enjoyment.

For His Name's sake.

SECURITY

Philip Hogan

Genesis 6: 14-16 (to “side”)

Psalms 48: 12-14

Colossians 1: 23

In Christianity we are brought into a sphere of security. I have read about a secure salvation, a secure relationship, and a secure testimony. The ark was surrounded by waters of destruction. It struck me that the ark was a very large vessel. It may have been around about 450 feet long, and Noah was instructed to pitch it “inside and outside”. It was completely sealed; it was completely secure. In that respect it was impregnable. What God brings us in touch with is impregnable. It is unassailable; as the work of Christ that was carried out on the cross was, and is, unassailable. The ark was completely sealed. Our brother and sister have put their faith in the work of the Lord Jesus for themselves personally, and it is to characterise their whole life, up to now as individuals, but now their life together as a married couple.

There was one door in the ark. Our brother and sister have both come through that one door. They know what that door is: the door speaks of Christ. It is vital that everyone knows what it is to come through that one door. There is no other way; there is no other door. It is a tremendous thing when you put your faith in Christ and know that that work is established once and for all, and it is a work that has been completely carried out to God's satisfaction. It gives a tremendous sense of security, a sense of security that transcends anything that can be known in this world, where people strive after financial security and strive after job security; and there is very little of either in this world. But the security of knowing and having your faith pinned on Christ far outweighs any other security that you are likely to experience in your lifetime.

Then it says that Noah was to pitch it inside. You might say, 'Why did he need to pitch it inside as well as outside?'. But that is what we have to do. That is what Christ has done, but we have to appropriate that work, and He has given us the resources of the Holy Spirit in order that that pitch can be applied. It can be applied in our lives; it can be applied in our household circumstances; so that there is what is perfectly and utterly sealed, so that what is outward, and what is outside under judgment, cannot penetrate. The ark rose above all that.

And then it says, “A light shalt thou make to the ark”. The light was like a window; so our brother and sister, as well as knowing what it is to come in by the same door, also know what it is to look out of the same window, to have their outlook towards heaven, to have a spiritual outlook, an outlook that characterises everything they do in their lives, that characterises the way they operate, the way they move. That is an outlook which is heavenward, an outlook which finds its centre in Christ where He is at present.

When we come to Psalm 48 it speaks about “bulwarks”. It refers to a defensive wall. There are bulwarks on ships too: in the old days they used to use very hard timber, and then they used to impregnate it with pitch to make sure the ship was waterproof, to make sure that it was sealed. In the midst of a world that is marked by atheism, agnosticism and alternative messages we can apply the thought of bulwarks to our households which are characterised by how they stand in terms of their Christian outlook. Christianity is being assailed from all sides and yet in the midst of that God has established these bulwarks: “Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces”.

Before that it says, “Walk about Zion”. One of the privileges of marriage is that you can explore things together. You can explore this territory, you can explore together. You can share an impression of the greatness of the Lord Jesus, you can have some impression of heaven, and you can discuss it and you can, in that respect, explore it together. It is a great thing to be able to do that.

And then going out from that I believe there is what is seen outwardly; so there is a testimony in these bulwarks. There is what is sure and steadfast and reliable and what is being worked out in our day-to-day experiences, through the good experiences and through the difficult experiences. Sometimes our households go through very difficult exercises, but there is what is unassailable, that we put our faith in, the Lord Jesus. And He would come in and He would help us through these exercises. He would come in and would show us His friendship, show us His love; and as we come before Him, even in the simple day-to-day, run-of-the-mill exercises and circumstantial difficulties that we may have, there is what is being worked out in each of our hearts that is sure and is steadfast, not because of what we are as humans, but rather because of what He is in all His greatness, in all His reliability, in all His consistency.

Then there is what would shine out “to the generation following”. There are many young people here today. There are children, teenagers, and they all have different exercises. Their life is ahead of them, but there is what is carried on, what is going forward in life, going forward in power. The testimony is not going to fade out. We might think it is here in weakness and smallness, but yet it is not going to fade out because there is what is living, there is what is glorious, and there is what is absolutely dependable because that is the work of Christ.

Then it says, “For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide until death”. It is a tremendous thing to think that it says of the One we have to do with, the One we have a real relationship with, as our brother and sister have known what that relationship is, “For this God is our God for ever and ever”. The same One that created the worlds, the same One that worked out the fine detail of creation, is our God. He is a God with whom we can have a real relationship and it says, “he will be our guide until death”. We can bring that into all our relationships. He will be “our guide until death”. We have known what it is for Him to be our Guide. Sometimes He will show us a way that is not according to what we thought it would be. We all have our lives planned out for ourselves; we all have our ambitions and aspirations. Sometimes God will show us there is a way that is different to my way and your way, but what we do know is “he will be our guide until death”.

In Colossians it says, “if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm, and not moved away from the hope of the glad tidings, which ye have heard, which have been proclaimed in the whole creation which is under heaven”. We have been brought into touch with the glad tidings. We live in a world where there is much which is negative, where there is much which would try to erode the very essence of Christianity, but there are glad tidings from heaven, and our brother and sister have been the beneficiaries of these glad tidings. They have known what it is for these glad tidings to change their lives. They have known what it is to have the hope of the glad tidings within their hearts and, as their household is set up together, something of that hope is seen outwardly in testimony, seen by neighbours, seen by friends, seen in simple acts of going to the meeting and reading the Bible. These are things which characterise the Christian household, and it is seen in testimony, and it is all based on the fact that we do have hope, “the hope of the glad tidings”. So the testimony is entirely unassailable and the testimony is worked out in our relationships together and it will go forward and it will

go on in power as we have this hope.

So, as to our brother and sister, it says, “if indeed ye abide in the faith”. Well, we can simply “abide in the faith”, bring faith into our circumstances, bring faith into our day-to-day lives. We have these Scriptures in our hands and as we exercise faith, the Scriptures will open up and we can see something of the glories of Christ, something of the greatness of what God has in mind for us. And as well as that we have the power of the Holy Spirit who would open them up and who would give us a view of these towers that we read about in Psalm 48, so that we can explore these things. We can “walk about Zion” and we can see the towers, see a spiritual landscape in all its greatness and all its glory, a landscape that is greater than anything else in this world, “if indeed ye abide in the faith founded and firm”. Well, the bulwarks abide in the faith: they are “founded and firm”; their foundation is in Christ and they are firm because His work is complete, and it is assured, and I am sure our brother and sister will find there is great stability in having to do with Christ in their day-to-day circumstances.

May He bless the word.

Words given at a marriage meeting

Glasgow

13th April 2013

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Leviticus 23: 33-44

There is something special about the feast of tabernacles, which is that it has no antitype.

There were three *great* feasts - the Passover, Pentecost, and the Tabernacles - when every Israelite had to present himself before God in Jerusalem. Christ is our Passover, the Holy Spirit our Pentecost; the feast of tabernacles is not yet come and nothing in the history of God's people answers to it yet. This feast took place after the harvest and after the grape harvest. The harvest is "the completion of the age" (Matt 13: 39); the harvest, the judgment when God distinguishes the good grain from the darnel and separates them, Matt 13: 24-30, 36-43. The grape harvest is the pure vengeance and indignation of God against the vine of the earth, of which the grapes are ripe to be trodden down in the winepress of God's wrath.

The feast of tabernacles can only be celebrated when Israel is on the earth after the time of the wilderness. It is in memory of that time that the people passed seven days in tents.

We find here the "joy" of God's people when all is over, when they enjoy the full accomplishment of the promises. It is not only the joy of salvation in the heart. God, who would have His people around Him, draws them through grace, presented in the sacrifice of Christ (the Passover), gathers them by the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) and, after having judged evil and delivered the people, puts them in possession of the joy tasted in the accomplishment of the promises (the feast of tabernacles).

Deuteronomy 16: 1-17 also presents these three great feasts to us, but the moral centre is different, v 5, 7. There is in the Passover, in one sense, the joy of no longer being a slave in Egypt any more, but there is the bread of affliction at the same time, v 3. The means whereby God delivers us are an infinitely precious thing, but the idea that we have been slaves in Egypt is attached to that. The leavened bread which had to be removed from their houses recalls what was forbidden; they had to make haste to remove it. There is deliverance, but after having enjoyed it as an extraordinary deliverance, Israel hastens to return to their tents, v 7.

Pentecost (v 9-12) went a bit further. The dominant thought

here is joy, not repentance; the presence of the Holy Spirit bringing fellowship, joy and grace which extend even to the stranger, the orphan and the widow, v 11. The name of Jehovah becomes the centre of the joy of the people who surround Him. In all this rejoicing, the people remember that they are no longer slaves; this answers for us to what is said to us: "Walk in the Spirit" Gal 5: 16.

In verses 13-15 - the feast of tabernacles - it is no longer even commanded to keep these statutes. It is pure joy; it is really a commandment to rejoice. When God will have finished all His work to gather His people, that they may rejoice in everything, that Satan bound will no longer be able to hinder the joy of any more, it will be without mixture, without fear and without end. At the Passover, there was the "bread of affliction", and at Pentecost, they still had to take care in a world of sin to "keep the statutes"; but when all are gathered around God, in definitive possession of the promises, the only commandment is, "Thou shalt be wholly joyful", v 15.

It is the same for the child of God today: he is still in the position of remembering his bondage in Egypt, he sighs for the time of full blessing, and much more than that, for better understanding of the things which God has prepared for those that He loves. In resurrection, the more we let our hearts go, the more we will glorify the Lord. Joy now always leaves a door open to some fall, as soon as we do not remember the deliverance from Egypt or we do not watch to walk by the Spirit while we are still in this world.

Revelation 14: 15-20 speaks of the harvest and the grape harvest on the earth. In Matthew 13: 39, the harvest is the completion of the age; it is not a simple judgment for there is a harvest of good grain and a separation of the darnel. The grape harvest takes place when all that remains is evil and unmixed. God tramples it in the winepress of His indignation and wrath.

After the execution of this judgment, we find the full joy of God's people, the evil which was hindering us from enjoying His goodness being destroyed.

The feast of tabernacles is made up of two parts: earthly glory and heavenly glory. It will become Israel then to remember that they have been in the wilderness, where their sin held them during forty years, away from the blessing. Even so, they will fully enjoy the latter; they will keep the memorial of having been in the wilderness.

As to ourselves, it is not on account of our sins that we have been kept in the wilderness, for this latter is our part as being conformed to the sufferings and the death of Christ. When the glory comes to pass for us, there will be only joy. Having found, as being faithful, that the world is a wilderness, and having passed through it faithfully, we shall have only joy at the end of our course. Such is our own position, [as] Christians; it is why an eighth day is added to the feast of tabernacles, the beginning of a new week into which one can only enter through resurrection. It is the great day of the feast: everything is found there. This day exceeds the seven days; everything that God gave His people on the earth belongs to a state of things into which only resurrection brings us. John 7 gives the description of it. In verse 8, it was not yet the time for Christ to show Himself to the world. That will happen when He will appear in the true feast of tabernacles. The Lord's brethren represent the unbelieving Jews here. Later (v 9-10), Jesus goes up to the feast in secret; but on the eighth day, the great day, He shows Himself publicly, a figure of what must happen through His death and resurrection. He announces the rivers of living water for those who shall believe on Him, grace to whosoever thirsts, the Holy Spirit who will be the earnest of the heavenly glory into which Jesus was going to enter. The Holy Spirit is the testimony to the glory of the Son of man in our hearts, the seal, the earnest of the inheritance. He is given to us while awaiting the full manifestation of the glory. It is not only the Holy Spirit as a principle of life, but a river which overflows and flows out from us because we have the knowledge of the glory and the joy which belongs to us. This makes us long for the time when this will come to pass and when we will enjoy in liberty all the results of grace!

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