

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

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STABILITY

Bert Taylor

Isaiah 33: 5-6

I trust that the Spirit of God may help us to speak of stability. We live in a world that has none, which has been exposed to us in recent times, and perhaps we needed it. Men do tend to think that there is stability in this world; politicians thought they had come to a time when boom and burst were past. God has exposed these things for our sakes, dear brethren, to give us to see that there is no stability outside of God. The verse I read is, "he shall be the stability of thy times".

Whatever these times may be, stability can be found in Him, and in Him alone. In sorrow or in joy He is our stay. Nothing can be sustained by man, but Christ has come on to view, and was ever in God's mind to be the stability of our times. Sin has created instability on every hand, but even when sin came into the world God's words were that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, Gen 3: 15. Before ever sin came in God had Christ in His mind to bring in stability that would continue; I trust we will speak of it continuing to the last page of the Bible, in a Man who has brought everything onto new ground, and brought persons through to God's eternal glory. May our hearts be touched, I trust by the Spirit, to put our confidence in Him, who is the stability of our times.

I would like to speak first of all about God's word, the Bible. If we are going to come to stable ground we must listen to God's word. He has set it out, and there is not a book in the universe that has been more stable than the Bible; and men today, and the enemy today, are set to undermine the authority of the word of God. Alas, this has been sanctioned by the authorities in this very city of late. Men were seeking to destroy and, at least, remove the distinctiveness of the Bible, and they were even destroying some pages of it; which the authorities allowed. That is the day we are in. One dear Christian commented on that occasion, 'Christians need not be cast down; since the beginning of time the hammers of infidelity have all been broken on the anvil of truth'. I thought that was well put: 'the hammers of infidelity'. They have been going hammer and tongs, as we say, but they have all been smashed on this One who is the stability of our times.

Oh the folly of men; they are trying to understand how the world

began. Job's friend asked thousands of years ago, "Canst thou by searching find out God?", Job 11: 7. They are trying to find out about man, how the worlds were created; the Bible could tell them very completely in one verse, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", Gen 1: 1. Men are trying to disprove it, but they never will. What resources it would have saved if men had just settled on these two things, instead of trying to disprove the word of God; it would settle the national debt by far.

I commend to you the reading of the Scriptures. The need for young people reading the Bible has been mentioned today already. If you want to train your memory, memorise Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians 13. Homework was referred to; there is good homework. You will see there a Man whom Isaiah loved to speak about. It comes out in chapter after chapter, and, referring to stability, he says, "And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land", Isa 32: 2. There is stability. If you learn these verses it will help you in your pathway, and I say again, learn them when you are young. In 1 Corinthians 13 you will see how everything operates; "Love never fails", verse 8. But there is a special touch in learning these things when you are young, and I say this that God has a great interest in seeing persons who in their youth would give their time to be interested in His things. I can tell you with all assurance that God will give you an impression in your youth, if you make room for it, that will be the stability of your times.

Well, I say that to commend reading the Bible; our brother referred to it last night and Daniel was in my mind. He was reading the book of Jeremiah, not a book that I would turn to as first choice, but he learnt in Jeremiah that Christ would be the stability of his times. Daniel could not understand the public breakdown, and many of us have been turned aside by the breakdown, by thinking things depended on man. But Daniel understood, as he was reading and praying; that is when God touched him. God saw that a young man had turned aside in a time of great pressure, and He touched him. I never speak about Daniel without thinking about the last verses. It says, "go thy way ... and stand in thy lot at the end of thy days", Dan 12: 13. God assured him, 'I will look after the captivity, but you will stand in your lot at the end of the days'. He died a restful man. Christ was the stability of his times.

Well, the Scripture is full of encouragement for us, and as Peter commends the writings of Paul, he says, "some things are hard to be

understood", and that is true, but Daniel understood by praying. Peter says, 'Do not write it off'; he says, "the untaught and ill-established wrest, as also the other scriptures, to their own destruction", 2 Pet 3: 16. The Scriptures will still stand, and Peter more than once commends to you the reading of the Scriptures. He illuminates the whole of the Old Testament when he says, "holy men of God spake under the power of the Holy Spirit", 2 Pet 1: 21. That puts all these Old Testament scriptures in their own authority. How was Moses able to write Genesis? Can men answer that? Holy men of God wrote under the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible and its writings are inspired. Approach the Scriptures, dear friend, with reverence, all the more so today; it is God's word. It has authority, and it has charm. And the charm of them will grow on you as you experience the blessedness of them. Paul refers to them too; he says, "Think of what I say", 2 Tim 2: 7. As you think about it, Paul tells you, the Lord will open up these things to you. Men dismiss them because they do not see the authority, the inspiration, of the Scriptures; "Every scripture is divinely inspired and profitable for teaching", 2 Tim 3: 16. We all need that - for conviction, we certainly need that too; it is inspired to affect us. You never really read the Scriptures without being affected. It says about piety that it is profitable for all things and the Scriptures would come into that category too.

I only speak about that briefly to show that if we are going to reach stable ground we must begin at the bottom. Very often, and especially when we are younger, we aspire to build without a sure foundation. Scripture tells us about that as well. The Lord says at the end of those beautiful legislation chapters in Matthew on the mountain, "Whoever therefore hears these my words and does them, I will liken him to a prudent man, who built his house upon a rock", chap 7: 24. That rock is Christ, the stability of our times. He speaks of another man who maybe reads the word, or hears it, but he does not do it, and "he shall be likened to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand", v 26. That is what the world's system is built on, dear friend: it is built on sand, but the Lord says that it will be tested. And, dear brother and sister, you will be tested in your pathway of life. Where is your foundation? It requires exercise to build on rock but that Rock is Jesus, a Man who would charm your heart; but the sand is very unstable. It lets you down with the tests, and falls by the way. You find many people like that in the gospels; they fall by the way. But here the Lord commends the person who hears and does. In a day to come there will

be many who will say to Jesus, "thou hast taught in our streets; and he shall say, I tell you, I do not know you", Luke 13: 26, 27. Why? Because they did not do; they did not do His words. It is very testing for us; the Lord says that Himself. Many will say, Lord "you taught in our streets"; they may be like those who go to the meetings, born in a Christian household, and brought up to hear the things of God; but they did not do them. And doing them requires faith, faith in the One who is speaking. The Scriptures would tell us, firstly, that it brings you to repentance. In the epistle to the Romans, you will see that God in His patience has removed every other man out of sight in Christ and in His work, and He has brought Him to be the stability of our times. As you read through you will see that "all have sinned" (chap 3: 23), but you will see too, as it goes on, how Abraham, a man of faith, believed God's word, chap 4: 3. Some boast in the light they have; it is very precious, but it makes us very responsible. To have light God looks for an answer, and that answer is in faith; so I would like to speak about "the steps of the faith ... of our father Abraham", verse 12.

In Genesis 13: 14 it says, "And Jehovah said to Abram, after that Lot had separated himself from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art ..."; and in verse 18, "Then Abram moved his tents, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron. And he built there an altar to Jehovah". There is stability. But how did he reach it? He reached it by moving his tents. He did not only get light, but in faith he responded to the light, and he came on to stable ground. Lot, earlier in the chapter, was deluded; he looked, and saw those well-watered plains and he thought them like the land of Egypt, v 10. Has the world an attraction for you? It has for us all, and as long as we are in this condition the enemy will use different departments of it to appeal to us at different ages, but Lot had some light, he had moved so far with Abraham, and he had proved something of God's goodness; but there comes a time when Abraham and Lot could not go on together.

In Abraham's life there was a Lot, in Isaac's life there was an Ishmael, and in Jacob's life there was an Esau. Lot and Esau had the same advantages as Abraham or Jacob had, but they did not value the light that came to them. Dear brethren, may we in these days value and move in relation to the light that comes to us. Abraham moved his tents. There is one thing I see in scripture; there is no middle ground. It is one thing or another; you are lost or you are saved; you are in the joy of

Christ and the appreciation of His person, or you are struggling in the world. Scripture is very clear there is no middle ground, and that is what Abraham came to. In these days especially things are being weakened. These things test us. We are tested at weddings and funerals some people say, and that is very true. I do not think Abraham would go to Lot's anniversaries. He was looking forward, and Lot was looking backward. "He moved his tents"; that was everything that he had. It involved a sacrifice for him and for us to be in the enjoyment of the light we have today there has been tremendous sacrifice by those who have gone before; let us hold fast to the ground that we have been brought on to. That is what Abraham did, "he moved his tents"; he had no intention of compromising. I heard of a young man speaking to an older brother about some links that he had formed, and he said he was trying to help someone, he thought he would try and bring them into fellowship. The old brother said, 'There is a table here; stand up on that table'. The young man stood up on the table, and he said, 'Now pull me up onto the table'. The young man said, 'It is impossible'. 'Yes', he said, 'but I can easily pull you down'; "evil communications corrupt good manners", 1 Cor 15: 33. It is easy to get pulled down if your eye is not on Christ; He is the stability of our times. You say, 'I am not able for it': look to Christ. He, and He alone, is the stability of our times. That verse in Isaiah is very beautiful, speaking of wisdom, all that we need; Paul puts it in his own words, "Christ Jesus .. has been made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and holiness, and redemption", 1 Cor 1: 30. You have everything there, the stability of our times. We have been speaking about that in these readings, but what I am concerned about in this meeting is that we move our tents. It is humbling, dear brethren, to recount many three day meetings where the same things have come up, and have had to be gone over again and again. "God is not mocked; for whatever a man shall sow, that also shall he reap", Gal 6: 7. That is a sure thing of scripture.

But here Abraham is moving his tents and he is going to reap a wonderful harvest. It says he "moved his tents, and came and dwelt"; he was not just moving his tent for a holiday, he "moved his tents, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre". You can look through Genesis and you will see him at the end of his days at Mamre, a beautiful place to be. As he moved in faith, God says, 'I will assure you'. He said, "Look from the place where thou art ... for all the land that thou seest will I give thee". Here it was on the earth; He says, 'I will give you all that'. He leads him out another day; here he is looking out, but another day He

says to Abraham, "Look now toward the heavens", and what did he see? He saw the stars of the heavens, Gen 15: 5. He saw glory, and Mamre is a place where you come onto that; it says, "which are in Hebron". It relates to the purpose of God; it was built long before Egypt, which was man's building, Num 13: 22. Hebron was God's building, a place where divine thoughts and purpose could be unfolded.

It says "he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre". Oh, these were beautiful trees! Abraham did not plant them, and in divine grace in moving our tents we come into blessing. But it is by the Spirit; Paul says, "Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him", 1 Cor 2: 9. Abraham got a taste for that when he looked up, star differing from star in glory, and then he looks at these oaks of Mamre. What a sight they were! I do not know how many there were, but, to apply the scripture, he would name these oaks. He would go to one and look at it and say, 'My sins are all forgiven'; I will just read Romans 8: 30: "But whom he has predestinated, these also he has called; and whom he has called, these also he has justified; but whom he has justified, these also he has glorified"; there are the oaks of Mamre. As Abraham went round them he could say, 'Well, I have been called'. Why have I been called? These are all steps in faith of Abraham. 'Called, yes', he says, 'I was called, and I answered to it'; how blessed to see those "whom he has called ... he has justified". Justification is a wonderful thing. The enjoyment of these oaks of Mamre would settle a great deal of difficulties among us, because a lot of our sorrows and a lot of our exercises, especially where they are prolonged, are caused by someone trying to justify themselves; they have not enjoyed justification. You are not called upon to justify yourself; you are not able for it; the Lord says, 'I have already done it': "whom he has called, these he also has justified". What does it mean? You are set up before God in the blessed assurance of your place in Christ. What a cost it was! It says we are justified by faith, but there is more than that. James does not just leave things there; he says, "Was not Abraham ... justified by works ...?", Jas 2: 21. Faith must come into expression. It comes out in your works. Men say, 'Well, you know, God knows my heart', but what is in your heart will come out in your pathway. It will come out in your speech; it will come out in your conduct. Yes, God knows your heart, but maybe you do not know it as you should. The heart of man is incurable, Jer 17: 19. The Authorised Version says it is "desperately wicked". There is hope for a desperate case, but there

is no hope for an incurable case. There is the accuracy of scripture; the heart of man is "incurable", Jer 17: 9. But here is a heart that is ready to be impressed by these oaks. And he gets a fresh sense of how he stands before God; so in Romans justification leads to peace with God, and I know no happier part in your life than to be at peace with God. While we are justified by faith, it is in the power of His blood; what a cost. Abraham looking at these oaks would say, 'What a work went into them'. They did not grow up overnight, but there they are standing in all their stability, and that is the work of God; there for us to be impressed with and to appropriate into our souls so that we may become as Abraham became, stable as the oaks of Mamre. Well, you get more than that; there is another one that would be called 'reconciliation'. When I think of them, you see justification, reconciliation and sonship. There are people in the enjoyment of the love of God, set up on stable ground. And these oaks are there to this day. It says elsewhere they were his possession, standing there in all their majesty, Gen 49: 30. The hammers of infidelity have hit them indeed, but they stand there in Abraham's soul, and that is where stability is needed. It says, "he built there an altar". That kept him fresh in his relations with God. He could approach God justified, reconciled, and in the dignity and liberty of sonship; he built an altar there.

He builds one or two different altars, and you will see as Abraham goes on in his life he is growing in the knowledge of God. He is tested; he is worried about his brother Lot. He seeks to save him, and in the hour of victory a king comes to him and says, "take the property for thyself"; Abraham says, 'You can add nothing to me', Gen 14. God strengthened him for the test. Abraham was tested; it says that; "God tried Abraham", Gen 22: 1. And, dear brethren, we are all under test more than we think.

Gideon's ten thousand were tested by a very simple thing, how they drank water. You say, 'There is nothing in that', but it brought out whether they were committed or not, Judg 7: 7. And God brings things into our life to test us as to whether we are committed. Simple things test us as to where our committals are, and how stable we are in what we rest on.

Well, Abraham was tested when the king of Sodom met him; he said he was not going to take anything at all from the world; he said, 'I have all I need'. In type the great High Priest, the Son of God, had already blessed him; he says, 'You cannot add anything to me'. He had

a fresh impression of Christ as the stability of his times. He goes on in his pathway and he gets other tests and other visitations. That is what keeps us fresh. We are not just resting on our past experiences, precious as they are, as they bear fruit in our souls, but Abraham went on his path in the steps of faith with fresh impressions of Christ. On the next occasion God says to him "Fear not Abram; I am thy shield, thy exceeding great reward", Gen 15: 1. Think of having God for a shield. Could any of these fiery darts ever get through? Dear brethren, "Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded", Prov 4: 23. God would help us to guard our affections that they do not stray, or be drawn away by these testings that we all have. Abraham has doubts, but God recovers him with fresh impressions of Himself, until he comes to this point; he addresses God as "the Eternal God" (Gen 21: 33), the stability of our times. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms", Deut 33: 27 AV. Abraham, in Genesis 24, in type is thinking about Christ and the assembly. As he is going off the scene he has a view of the great work of the Spirit of God that will bring the assembly to Christ, and will bring her into the appreciation as he himself had tasted of the heavenly Man. What a way to finish; as he had some sense of Rebecca coming on to view, he saw Isaac in all his glorious worth, and there he is seeing in type Christ and the assembly in the present enjoyment of the movements of divine grace.

I pass on to Jacob for a moment. I want to speak of how Jacob was revived. He is very much more like us, perhaps. He had been discouraged. He began to think that Joseph had died. He is very like what is prevalent today; many only know a historical Jesus. He needed awakening in his affections. What stirred Jacob in his life was when Joseph was born. Typically Jesus came into his heart. He said, 'I cannot live here among all this confusion'. He moved his tents, and as he moved he was tested still, Gen 30, 31. But he had set his path; Joseph has to be made room for: let Jesus come into your life. Let him stir your affections, as you make room for Him. Jacob had many sorrowful exercises, and he became discouraged. Even the brethren could not revive him. There they are, one after another they speak to Jacob, and tell him that Joseph wants him. Their word did not carry power. We feel that in speaking to some discouraged believers, we cannot bring the conviction of our own enjoyment of having One who is the stability of our times into our testimony to revive them, and that was the brethren there. They could not convince Jacob, until "he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent", Gen 45: 27. I would like to have seen

him when he saw them. I think that on these wagons, was written 'Zaphnath- paaneah'; Joseph is alive, Saviour of the world, Sustainer of life, and Revealer of secrets. Jacob could not hold back. "I will go and see him", he says. He saw the wagons that Joseph had sent. It is a type of the Spirit bringing into our hearts something of a glorified Man. Jacob was living on an historical Jesus. He did not know him as the Man in the glory. He did not know the wealth that was there all the time. While he was feeding his soul with what could not sustain life, there was a place of plenty, and room for that beloved man. He says, "I will go and see him". Will you do that tonight, my friend? Move your tent. The Spirit alone can quicken our affections, and may He do it in this very hour. Quicken your heart to arise and see Him. He says, "before I die", but oh, what a time to be revived, to be restored beyond anything he ever imagined. The brethren there, they did not quite grasp it, but there was Jacob living in the wealth of the land.

Dear brethren, the wealth of the land is open to us, and where are we living? Some of our dear brethren whom we love are living in breakdown, confused circumstances, very, very solemn, and we should carry the shame and sorrow of it. Can we convey something of Joseph still alive in our contacts with them, instead of going over past days. The best time in Jacob's life was when he was revived. The Spirit brought him into the joy of a Man in the glory; there in all His wealth, dispensing blessing. I would like to have been Benjamin. Benjamin had a special portion. There was still going to be five years of famine, and Benjamin had five changes of clothing, a new suit every year, Gen 45: 22. The famine was going on; in Egypt the clothes were getting old and worn, but he would stand out in all the joy that Joseph had blessed him with.

I want to finish in Revelation. If we could turn to Revelation 1: 8, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, he who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty", and verse 17, "And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear nor; I am the first and the last". And on the last page of the Bible, chap 22: 16, 17, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." These are three of the 'I ams' of Revelation; "I am", that is stable, unchanging. "I am the Alpha and the Omega", and He fills everything in between, He is the stability of our times. He says, "I am the first and the last" and "have

the keys of death and of Hades", chap 1: 18. He is in control. The book of Revelation is a book of great happenings, but if you look carefully you will see everything is controlled from heaven; the very hours, the very days of all that was happening, and all these tribulations, were controlled by Him who is the Alpha and the Omega. Apply it to our lives, dear brethren; do we apprehend Him as the great 'I AM'. It says he became dead, and as alive He established His right in His manhood to overrule all that Satan had brought in, and annul him who had the might of death, to take the power of it out of his hand, and all His power tonight is available to you and to me if we are going to make a move. I trust these meetings will help us all to move our tents; to come and live in the light of the purpose of God, where things are unchanging. Mr Darby says,

If clouds have dimmed my sight,
When passed, eternal Lover,
Towards me, as e'er, Thou'rt bright. (Hymn 51).

There was Jacob,

John had this because he became in Spirit on the Lord's day. Dear brethren, let us respect the possibilities of the Lord's day. We are apt to dilute it. It does not end at the Supper; we sometimes have the idea we can have the Supper, and go and do what we like. John says, "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (chap 1:10), and see what he received. He might well have been overwhelmed by how badly he had been treated, and he was a prisoner, but he "became in the Spirit on the Lord's day", the whole day, and he had these impressions: not just one. And so, at the end, he hears, "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come". It shows how near the bride is to the Spirit; these are the overcomers of Revelation 2 and 3, there they are in the bride. The bride is not something mystical or fanciful; it is formed of persons who have moved their tents, who, in the midst of whatever the confusion publicly, have found one who is the stability of their times, and they are overcoming. Mr James Taylor suggests, if you care to look at it - and it is worth looking at, you will see in the bride's garments, features of the overcomers of Revelation 2 and 3 (vol 47 p 464), "they shall walk with me in white", chap 3: 4. What formation there is going on, and that is what it closes with "the Spirit and the bride say, Come", in unison. A creature vessel and a divine Person say the same word at the same time; how precious to have that experience.

I want to read another verse. Jude is a man who warns us of the apostasy. In Jude, verse 20 he says, "But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God". That was John in Revelation, he was keeping himself in the love of God. "And now abide faith, hope, love; these three things; and the greater of these is love", 1 Cor 13: 13. Have love for the Man who has become the stability of our times! And that is what Jude is speaking of here, he says, "keep yourselves in the love of God", and in verse 24, "But to him that is able to keep you without stumbling". Maybe you thought that was impossible. Is stumbling the nature of your life - blown about by every wind of doctrine? Jude says, "But to him". But just listen to the doxology "and to set you with exultation blameless before his glory, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages. Amen." May we all say it, for His Name's sake.

Glasgow

4th August 2010

BLESSING

Jim T Pye

Galatians 4: 4-7, 3: 13-14

Ephesians 1: 3-6

I had in mind in this hymn (No 212) that we have sung that God wants to bless. God wants to bless. How wonderful that is! We see it in the Old Testament, how God blessed men. It says of Isaac that He "blessed him ... and he became continually greater, until he was very great", Gen 26: 12. He grew continually greater; God blessed him. He blessed Jacob too, although he was a bit of an underhand person in many ways, but God blessed him. We see it right through in the gospel, how God worked with men, men who were prepared to be obedient and to do what God told them, God blessed them. But you see, dear friends, in the incoming of sin God has been, I would say reverently, hindered in blessing men and women and boys and girls. You say, 'Well, why is that, because naturally we are disobedient?'. These men we have spoken about, Isaac and Jacob were unusual men; I would say that carefully, they became obedient men as God had worked with them, men who were unique in their time - Noah also, all of these persons were unique, as God had worked with them. But sin has increased and man is constantly disobedient, and God has been restrained in blessing man. Do you think God feels that? God has blessings, storehouses of blessings, which have been withheld because of man's disobedience, and wretchedness, and sinful condition. God feels that. He wants to bless. That is God's disposition. He does not want to curse; He does not want to condemn: He wants to bless men but He has been held back. God cannot bless a sinner as away from Him who is revelling in the things of this world. They take pleasure in sin; it says man takes pleasure in things which we would naturally be disgusted at: you read it in Romans 1: 32. It is quite disturbing. God cannot bless men while they are like that.

Well, dear friends, God had in mind that men should be blessed. He was not going to be held back. These were thoughts in His mind long before this world even came into being; God had in mind to bless men. These things may be beyond you to understand at the moment, but God had in mind that He would have a worshipping creation, worshipping men like Christ, like His beloved Son.

So here it says, "but when the fulness of the time was come"; it is

almost as if God has said, 'Now, I have been held back for thousands of years. I have worked with man, I have given him the law. They have failed and now I am going to give them Christ, and in Christ I am going to bless them'. Think of what He had in this Man, this blessed Man, dear friends, who came here. It says that He came under law. The law was right in its own regard, but God realised that man could not fulfil it. We read in Deuteronomy that, if they did not fulfil the law they were cursed. "And all the people shall say, Amen", chap 27: 15. They all said 'Amen' to it. Then it says that if they fulfilled the law, "Blessed shalt thou be in thy coming in, and blessed shalt thou be in thy going out". You can read all the blessings if you fulfil the law, Deut 28: 1-6. I suppose that the lawyer in Luke 10: 25 had fulfilled the law in some degree, and he came into some part of God's blessing in relation to that, but he lacked something: he was lacking in appreciation of Christ, he was lacking that Man in his life. He stood up, full of his own importance. I suppose he came to the Lord, thinking, 'There is not really much you can say against me; I have really done pretty well. I am really an upright man. The locals look on me and admire me'. I suppose he was expecting that from the Creator, the Creator of the world, the Saviour Jesus. Well, he did not get it. There was something missing. 'Well', you might say, 'I have a lot of things; I have a lot of blessings. I have a good wife, I have a nice house, I have a good job, with holidays planned'. These are all very nice things, material things that we wrap ourselves up with for a lot of our lives.

There was a man who had everything he needed, Belshazzar the king, in Daniel 5. He set a big feast up, a thousand people he invited to it. They were all drinking out of golden vessels. He had the greatest kingdom on the earth. What more could he need? Well, dear friends, it says, "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote ... upon the plaster of the wall", and it says, "his knees smote one against another", Daniel 5: 5, 6. Such a mighty man, such a mighty king, "his knees smote one against another" when he realised he had Someone greater to do with, the Almighty God. It says, "Thou art weighed in the balances". God weighed all these things he had: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting", Dan 5: 27. Dear friend, if you do not have Christ in your life, you might have everything else you need, but if you do not have Christ, God tonight is saying, 'I am weighing you in the balance, and I have found you wanting. I cannot bless you with what I want to bless you with'. If you are without Christ, dear friend, God cannot bless you. He wants to. Do not hold back the

blessing of God. God's deep innermost desire in His heart is to bless you.

Well, friend, come to this blessed Man here. How many came to Him; what blessings men proved as the Lord moved amongst poor and needy men who were sinners. What blessings men proved! The blind received sight; how wonderful! No one had ever given one who was born blind from birth sight, but this Man could. What blessings He was able to bestow. The flesh of the lepers healed became like that of a little child. What blessings He bestowed! What blessings flowed out from Jesus. He could not be held back. I was noticing in the footnote in Mark about the little children: it says in the verse, "having laid his hands on them, he blessed them", and the footnote says, 'Some read 'blesses', perhaps rightly, but the word is a strong one: 'blesses them abundantly', Mark 10: 16. That was the Lord here as He moved about amongst men, He was blessing them abundantly, and He loved to do it. It was the Father's will that He should do it, but He loved to do it because He knew He was pleasing the Father. The Lord realised the Father's feelings for men. He realised that His Father was being held back from blessing men because of the condition they were in. They were in bondage and fear of death all of their life. Well, here was a blessed Man who was going about undoing the works of the devil, setting men free. And we see the man at the gate of the temple. What he was looking for was money, but he got something far greater. He was blessed with Christ. He was able to rise up and praise God, "walking, and leaping, and praising God". What a blessing he received through the hands of Peter and John, Acts 3: 8.

Well, here is Jesus, "but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, come of woman, come under law, that he might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship". I was affected by that, "that we might receive sonship". I suppose it is the highest of God's blessings. If you look at Jacob and Esau in the Old Testament, Esau did not appreciate sonship. He did not appreciate the position he was given as the firstborn. It says, "Thus Esau despised the birthright", Gen 25: 34. He lost out on all the blessings. Jacob did things in an underhand way, but he received the birthright. He had a valuation of it, and he got the blessing. God took him up, and blessed him, and He says later on in Malachi, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau", chap 1: 3. As you move on in Genesis certain things Esau did were directly opposed to what God had in mind. God says, "I hated Esau". I have

thought about that, these men are both dead long ago and one day they will be raised, Jacob raised; as beloved of God. There are certain persons in Scripture, Daniel too, they were greatly beloved. How fine to be raised up out of the grave as greatly beloved of God. But, Esau is going to be raised up too, "I hated Esau", hated of God. Dear friend, if you are in your sins as away from Christ, and you have rejected Him, I would say carefully that God hates that. He cannot bear it. If you die in your sins, you will be raised in them, every single one of them, none of them left behind, and God will judge you in relation to that.

But I do not want to preach judgment. I want to make you understand, dear friends, the blessing of sonship, but before the blessings came out, this Man we are speaking about, Jesus Christ, had to die. Before the blessings could come forth, this One had to be cursed, "Cursed is every one hanged upon a tree", Gal 3: 13. He became a curse so that His people could receive the blessing. How wonderful that is, He was prepared to take up such a position of terrible suffering. It says, "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, (for it is written, Cursed is every one hanged upon a tree)". Dear friend, He hung there on Calvary's tree, that One of whom John could say, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world", John 1: 29. He was made sin; He was made that which God abhorred. Dear friend, He hung there as if all the wrong, all the sins that He bore there, were His. He took them on as if they were His own. How wonderful that is! Sinless, holy, undefiled, separated from sinners, this blessed Man took my sins upon Himself. I say that carefully, not that He did them, for we know that He was sinless, "holy, harmless, undefiled", Heb 7: 26. We know that but, dear friends, He was able, willing. Who is able to take away sins? Who is able? Here is a Man who was able to take away my sins. It is fine in the glad tidings to look at things personally. You may say, 'our sins'. I like to look at things personally and say He took away 'my sins'. He is prepared to take up the things that I would shudder to even speak about, or have them known about; He was prepared to take these up. He was prepared to take them on. He was made sin for me. If only men fully realised that the Lord Jesus was prepared to take up such a position as bearing the wrath of God, so that they should receive nothing but blessing. How wonderful that is!

Well, I do not seek to dwell on this too long, but He became a curse. He hung there, bearing sins, and yet one could say, "we indeed

justly ... but this man has done nothing amiss", Luke 23: 41. There was something there that could be seen. He was still "holy, harmless, undefiled". Even on the cross it could be said, "this man has done nothing amiss". If we had all been there, dear friends, we would all have been there rightly, but the Lord Jesus was there because of me, a Substitute. He became a curse, He was hung upon a tree, and there He was crucified, there He cried with a loud voice, and expired, and the soldier "pierced his side ... and immediately there came out blood and water", John 19: 34. That is the basis of blessing. I do not want to be irreverent, but I think God was longing for this, a time when that blood was going to be shed. He had said, "and when I see the blood ...", Ex 12: 13. How long He had waited, for hundreds of years. That blood had been determined before the foundation of the world. He says, "and when I see the blood". Think of God's delight in seeing that blood, that precious, shed blood of Christ. It says, "And lo, the veil of the temple was rent ...", Matt 27: 51. God was coming out. He was not going to wait, He was not going to hold back for another twenty or thirty years. God was coming out. The blessed God, having been held back for so long, is coming out through the perfection of that blessed work of Christ. The centurion says, "Truly this man was Son of God", Matt 27: 54. I think he would have been a believer; I think he might have been the first believer. Well, we know that the man on the cross became a believer, but I think that centurion might have been the first believer after the Lord's death. God is coming out. Nothing could hinder Him now. Dear friends, the blood was there. Persons who put their faith and trust in it could be there as un-condemned persons. If God justifies, who are we to condemn? How wonderful that God was coming out, and He was coming out in blessing. He was not coming out as a Man of war. He was not coming out to avenge the death of this blessed and holy Man, His beloved Son. He was coming out to bless men, and the first gospel preaching was in that city that crucified Him. God wanted to bless them. What a God! He could say, 'Well, the first gospel preaching is not going to be there. That is the place where my Son became a curse. That is where He was rejected fully by men. The gospel preaching will not go out there'. But, dear friend, God does not think like we think. God is rich in mercy, rich in blessing, going out to the very place that had crucified the Lord Jesus. How blessed that God should move in such a way towards His creature.

I thought to read in Ephesians because it says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with

every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". Now, maybe you have known your sins forgiven, and maybe you are rejoicing in that. You should be; it is a wonderful thing to know your sins forgiven, to know they have been lifted and removed for ever, for time and eternity. It is a wonderful blessing to receive but it is just the beginning. There are so many more. As we have said, there is reconciliation. You were once an enemy, foreign to God, without hope, without any of the promises, without any of the blessings. Israel had some blessing; you had nothing. Because of what we were as Gentiles we had nothing, but now as we have trusted in Christ Jesus we have been brought nigh by the blood of the Christ, and we have been "blessed ... with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". We now may become a confidante of God. How wonderful that is! He becomes your Friend, One to whom we are reconciled. God looks on you now in Christ. He does not look on your past history, its guilt is gone evermore. How blessed that is! Praise the Lord! That is the greatness of His work. God is looking on you in an entirely different way now, not as a sinner but as a saved sinner and as one of His sons. He has not only reconciled you, He is justifying you too. All of these blessings are flowing out. Have you put your trust in Him? Have you taken Him on? Are you enjoying Him, dear friend, or have you just stopped at your sinful condition being removed? Have you stopped there? God says, "I will pour out my Spirit", Joel 2: 28. How great it is that God has not only given His Son, He has also given you His Spirit. God is so rich in blessing. And then sonship, that is a great blessing, to be one of the sons of God. The firstborn son in some countries receives everything. There may be seven daughters before the son arrives but he is the firstborn son, and he receives everything. Maybe the whole title to the land, to the monies, to the cattle, whatever, he gets everything; the daughters get nothing. Well, how wonderful that in Christianity we are all firstborn ones. You might say, 'Well, Christ is the Firstborn'. Yes, Firstborn from the dead. What a glorious fact that is, Firstborn from the dead, but we are firstborn ones too. You say, 'Well, that is an impossibility; you can only have one firstborn'. There is nothing impossible with God, dear friend. He has placed us on that footing as firstborn ones; so we get everything. God is giving us everything; He has held nothing back; He is giving us everything in Christ because He has placed us on the same footing as Him. How blessed, how great God is! "Every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". He has given us brethren to walk with. How wonderful that is. He has given us

like-minded persons. We are not just going along on our own. I would be miserable if I were the only Christian. Dear friends, God has given us persons to walk with. He has given us the knowledge of the assembly, the mystery, these hidden mysteries. It speaks about the mystery hidden. That is another thing; God is wanting to reveal the mystery. It was there before the foundation of the world, the assembly, Christ and the assembly, "This mystery is great" (Eph 5: 32), but it was held back until, through the death and resurrection of Christ, God can reveal it, that you can be part of a vessel that is soon to be taken up. It is unique in its character, and you can be part of it, and you can be working in it; it is a blessing. These are things that are flowing out from Christ in heaven. I think we have to realise it is "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies **in Christ**", in nobody else but Christ. God has based everything in Him, "in him is the yea, and in him the amen", 2 Cor 1: 20. All the promises are there in that blessed Man, and they can be had no other way. This is treasure in heaven; these are spiritual blessings, these are not earthly ones. We will have to leave behind everything earthly, but spiritual blessings, dear friend, will go on throughout eternity. How wonderful that is - where moth cannot spoil, where thief cannot break through. These things are treasures in heaven, and we have to value them, value them now.

So it says here, "that we should be holy and blameless before him in love". What a difference, instead of being "an insolent overbearing man" (1 Tim 1: 13), as Paul could say; we can now be before Him, "holy and blameless". "Holy", we who were once sinners, wretched sinners; it shows the marvellous work and power of Christ, the precious power of the blood that we can be holy before God and in Him in love. We are not in Him in fear, but we are in Him in love. It settles everything.

Doubts have vanished, fears are groundless,
Now I know that love to me. (Hymn 212)

Dear friends, we are "before him in love", before God in love, "having marked us out beforehand". You come into a depth of things, you come through mercy's door, and what does it have on the door, 'Whosoever will', and as you look behind you see, "chosen ... before the world's foundation". It brings out a deep sense of worship and adoration in your soul as you realise, dear friend, that God had you in mind, He chose you in the Beloved before you were even born. How wonderful that is. You have to come through that door before you

realise these things. It says, "he has taken us into favour in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption, through his blood". Well, dear friends, you are in the Beloved now. You are like Daniel, "greatly beloved". Why is that? Those who have their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son, you are "taken ... into favour in the Beloved". You are going to be raised in that favour too. If you are left here, and fall asleep through Jesus, dear friends, you will be raised in the Beloved. What favour that is. That is another blessing to look forward to, to "put on immortality", 1 Cor 15: 53. That is a wonderful thing, to have a body of glory like "his body of glory (Phil 3: 21); what a great blessing that is. We are not going to be on any lower level. God has raised us up together, and He has poured out the same blessing on everyone. Dear friend, are you holding back the blessing because of where you are; where you are in your soul? Are you holding back God's blessing? Well, dear friends, I trust that your life indeed may be full of spiritual blessings.

Just in closing, an old preacher standing by the harbour eventually gathered quite a crowd and he said, 'All these boats, all these ships are all different sizes, but they all have three things in common. One, they have a captain; two, they have a cargo; three, they have a destination.' He said, 'If you are in your sins, Satan is your captain, your cargo sin, and your destination hell. But what I want to present to you tonight, if Christ is your Captain, your blessings are untold - "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", and your destination heaven'. Well, dear friends, I trust that your vessel is not laden with sin. I trust your cargo is "every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". What a cargo, dear friend! God will take it right up into heaven, and what an area of blessing that will be, untold blessings, far beyond what I can ever say or introduce you to but, dear friend, it will be a sphere of bliss. It is something I would hate you to miss. God does not want you to miss it either, but now it is offered free. Everything I have mentioned tonight is offered free but the offer might finish tonight. It might finish after this gospel preaching. Think of that, dear friend, if you have rejected Christ, if you have decided against having Christ as your Saviour: everyone here who has put their faith and trust in Him will be blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies" and will be taken to heaven but you will have lost out; think of that. Do not miss out on the blessing but first come to Christ, know what it is to be saved, know what it is for your sins to be removed by the power of that blood, and come into the blessing. God is waiting for you.

His hands are outstretched. Do not hold back, dear friend. He wants to bless you. May He do so, for His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

14th March 2010

KNOWLEDGE OF THE FATHER

Doug M. Welch

John 5: 17; 10: 14, 15, 27-31; 14: 1-3; 17: 14-26

I desire to say a little as to the knowledge of the Father, and to relate it to what we have had in these two days of meetings about fruitfulness. Fruit for us in the area in which God is working would lead us to the source, the holy Person of the Father Himself.

In these scriptures we will see that divine work is co-ordinated, and while divine Persons are distinguished and they have their unique glory in relation to the place they have taken in the economy of love, yet they are One. They are united in what they are doing, and what they are doing is very great indeed; in fact nothing is greater than God Himself, and nothing done is greater than what God does.

“Let us make man” (Gen 1: 26) is not to be obscure to us. Contemplated in “us” is plurality; the word used, Elohim. It is linked later with, “Jehovah Elohim” (Gen 2: 4), speaking of God desiring a relationship with man, and man has been set up by God to have that relationship. Even the human family would be an index as to what God has in mind for His family.

If we look, then, at Abel, there is a marked contrast between the offerings he brought from the firstlings of his flock and that brought by Cain. It speaks of the process of time: “And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat”, Gen 4: 4. “In process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to Jehovah”, Gen 4: 3. Immediately there is a line of demarcation which separates what really is in the mind and heart of God; something that would speak to Him of Christ. It was a burnt-offering that Abel brought, and even though a sin-offering lay at the door for Cain (v 7), it was a burnt-offering that Abel brought.

Then there are the wonderful expressions found in the life of Abraham. If we look at it in Genesis 22, “My son, God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering” (v 8), and it says very affectingly, “And they went both of them together”, v 8. How wonderful that is. They went to Jehovah-jireh, the mount of Jehovah, “God will provide”. The ram was caught in the thicket. Isaac was spared, although Abraham, typical of a man of faith (and the father of it), thought to slay Isaac, but God would not have that He would have the type end

at that point; but, for the ram caught in the thicket, there was no escape: "God will provide himself with the sheep for a burnt-offering", v 12, 13. Beloved, all the way through the scriptures something can be seen of, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work"; surely the Father was indicating what was pleasurable to His heart in the burnt-offering.

Now, the systems of types and shadows have been replaced by a system of light and love, and the anti-type of everything that we read about - whether it pertains to types, the families before Israel, Israel itself or the families that may be formed in the tribulation - lead back to the source, and speak to God of Christ. The assembly is a very great concept -

The concept and the consummation thine! (hymn 370)

Mr Wigram, another minister of the truth, expressed that idea as well in hymn 92.

How wonderful it is then to see that the assembly is Christ continued, Christ testimonially. Christ does not end. As long as Jesus lives there will be something to speak to God of Christ, even in testimony. What a wonderful vessel, composed of personnel who love Christ, who are like Christ, who will be for Christ, who enquire in the temple, who have life in His body. Christ lives in His body, and the bride is for Himself as a Man. (All this light belongs to the assembly). The Spirit came on the day of Pentecost to form the body and the bride, that which would speak to heaven of Christ and be for Him. How wonderful it is to have part in this. The sovereign love of God has made it all possible. It is through the death of Christ that we enter into it morally. How wonderful.

The ministry of the Lord Jesus, in blood and flesh condition here, related to the Father; the Lord spoke of the Spirit too because He would be concerned in His absence as to how the saints would get on (and honour the Father). There were others after Christ who would be concerned with how the saints got on. Are you concerned?

It is the Spirit - and nearness to the Spirit and the Lord - and nearness to the Father that lead us to a true knowledge of God, and it is through Christ and by one Spirit that we approach the Father; we know that from the Holy Scriptures. How wonderful that is.

The Father has something in mind for His own heart, and as we approach the Lord's day we would be imbued in our spirits as to the

knowledge of the Father, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". Think of the Lord linking on in that way (as a workman). How wonderful! The great Workman Himself, the Servant we read about in Mark's gospel; all leads to Him, the great workman who says, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". Think of David, and think of yourself. God's mercy has laid hold of you, a sinner of the Gentiles.

David was a sinner, and had to be recovered, which is evident when he named his son, "Solomon". The offspring of David is a type of the manhood of Christ and Him glorified. "He called his name Solomon; and Jehovah loved him", 2 Sam 12: 24. Then the prophetic word comes by the hand of Nathan the prophet, "and he called his name Jedidiah (meaning beloved of Jehovah), for Jehovah's sake", 2 Sam 12: 25. It is Christ typically, and speaks of love for the Son.

The scriptures speak of Christ; the interpretation of the scriptures was not made good (for understanding) until the Lord spoke with the two on the way to Emmaus, "Was not our heart burning in us as he spoke to us on the way", Luke 24: 32. The Interpreter was there, interpreting all the things concerning Himself. It all leads to Him, and the Lord Jesus in His ministry desires for us to be free before the Father, and to know Him.

Do we have knowledge of the Father? It is beyond one address, but I was struck by Mr Coates's hymn -

His hand, His house, His heart are free (Hymn 431)

- for help in setting on the address and drawing attention to the Person of the Father. These features of the Father are made available as is the Father's work and word.

There is something of the consideration of the Lord's hand in John 10, as His activity is spoken of in John 5, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". He links on with the Father's work therein (John 5: 17) and with securing the family in John 10, where He speaks of His hand, and then the Father's hand. I think it is to bring us into family conditions, and maintain us there, to be available for the service of God - in their hands for this purpose - across the Jordan, in family conditions, not occupied with our sins or the sins of others, but occupied with what is on the other side of the Jordan, the land.

Family conditions are very important in the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread is an expression of fellowship. It is in

remembrance of the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread, and must involve the brethren, the divine family.

When they broke bread in Acts they were set to the work; they wanted others to know about the Lord Jesus. They knew that the Lord would add to the assembly, that God Himself, in sovereign mercy and love, would manifest the elect through the preaching; man is relieved but more, as brought into the assembly. Generally (in the western world where profession exists), we do not preach to the heathen; we preach to persons who are in the profession, and they need the light of these things. They need the light of the Person of the Father; they need the light of receiving the Holy Spirit. They need the light of coming into an atmosphere of love where Christ can be seen by heaven in testimony. That is what persons need. That is what we need constantly. That is what we desire in our readings, to bring this out and get the gain of what has been formed in the divine nature in the souls of the brethren. Do you know why we have love for all the saints? It is because the divine nature is being formed. That is why we have love for all the saints. They had love for all the saints in Philemon's house, in the assembly which was in Philemon's house. Ephesian and Colossian light is seen in that house, v 5. We have love for all the saints, and we express that in the breaking of bread. We go out from the breaking of bread, and come back for the preaching of the word of God so that the seed can land on good ground and bear fruit. It is; not just for numbers to be added in localities, which is wonderful, but, as stimulating as that is - and may there be more added - there is to be something for God, something available to the Spirit which would be added to the assembly for divine pleasure and for praise and worship.

We have the Father's hand, we have the Lord's hand; they hold us for the service of God, and they are not going to let us go. The end of the dispensation may not see a large recovery in numbers; there is not going to be revival of Pentecostal days because the profession publicly ends when spued out, as it has been morally judged historically in Laodicea already, Rev 3: 16. But the quality of things goes through undisturbed from heaven's abstract view because the Spirit is here. The Spirit bears witness, and He has certain things in mind. Would you not like to be with the Spirit in what He has in mind? That requires being restful in the hand of the Lord Jesus, and restful in the hand of the Father.

There are great matters to be approached tomorrow as we seek

to be free for the Lord Jesus in the Supper. We want to announce His death until He comes into His own rights publicly, in the day to come. Does He have His rights in you, young brother and sister? Does He have His rights in your affections? Has He laid His claim upon you for the breaking of bread, and have you thrown in your lot with the brethren? Commit yourself to the truth and you will enjoy fellowship. Christ is the truth objectively, and the Spirit is the truth in you. The Spirit, the water and the blood bear witness, "and the three agree in one", 1 John 5: 8; Christ came into death, and would draw you to Himself. There is nothing here for you to find resource in. We are thankful for mercy, thankful for the human family, we will be thankful to be in the saints' homes tonight, but in the final analysis all is to be for God, and we remain in His hand. What great things He has in mind.

That brings us to His house in John 14, "In my Father's house". The abodes are prepared because that is where the Lord is personally. But, He is here testimonially, characteristically; Christ and only Christ, Christ above and Christ below. The Father has a house above where the indigenous character of the land comes to light as the saints respond, based upon their knowledge of the Father, as learned from Christ.

The assembly is essential to Christ in the Father's house; it is for Christ's use in testimony, but is essential for Christ's use in the service of God. There is nothing greater than this, young brother or sister. Committing ourselves to it is a very great thing, and we know when we are not in it because the Spirit will bear witness that we are not in it. Have you asked for the Spirit, or are you afraid to ask for the Spirit because it will require drastic change? As having the Spirit, you begin to behold, not your own glory or the selfish glory of man, but the glory of the Lord; with unveiled face we all do that. Therefore, there is a change, a transformation, "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit", 2 Cor 3: 18. We have the Spirit, and I would like to know more of the Spirit; even the knowledge of the Father is known in its clarity as we are with the Spirit near the Father.

Thus, the Father's house is accessible. We know that what follows the Supper is the proper privilege of the assembly. The Supper opens up that privilege. We want a touch of the Lord, so that we can behold His glory, "transformed ... from glory to glory", so that we can be for Him as available to Him.

The Lord is in the midst after the Supper, not exactly just of a locality, and our minds are capable (as having the Spirit) of taking account of the whole assembly, and His place in “the midst”. They are capable of having whole thoughts, because that is what the Lord has in mind.

The Lord will take account of us in our smallness in the locality, He will come into the meetings with us, He will help us in the way of teaching, as our Lord and Teacher, as we make way for the Spirit, but He has in mind the whole assembly, as in the letter to Philadelphia, “thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name”, Rev 3: 8. Have you kept His word, young brother, and young sister: are you breaking bread? I am not going to talk you into this, you have to have the Spirit, but it is a way to prove your love for Christ and for the brethren, and to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread because it opens up great privilege for you. Maybe to give out a hymn, if you are a brother, and to have the glory of Christ resting on your spirit if you are a nine year old or a ten year old sister, or an older sister. The Spirit of Christ is there resting on your own spirit, and you are providing that quiet support in affection for Christ as coming to light through the mouthpiece of the assembly given to one or another of the brothers there, acting as the mouthpiece of the assembly. You may be stimulated by something that a brother says, or by a hymn that is given out; if so, a brother does not wait, nor is he rolling something over in his mind exactly, but he stands up and gives expression. Christ is the Head of that expression, He is the Leader of the praises, and He leads us into the Father's house above.

Earthly language ceases as we progress in the service Godward; it is not exactly “this morning” (or words that may tend to link us with a place on earth). We are not thinking about what we were last week; it is what we are in the Father's hand and in Christ's hand as being in the Father's house where the Lord Jesus has already gone to prepare a place. We will enter there *actually* (literally) in a day to come, but we can be there now in Spirit for the service of praise. Do you know of anything greater than this?

What could you open up after we know the Headship of God as all in all? I do not understand how there could be something more. It may be so, but is there not a wonderful sense of power at the end of the meeting when God is all in all? Do you not feel it sometimes? We long for more. Then, we go forth into whatever we must, but with the savour

of the experience.

The Father's house is where responses - the intelligent affectionate responses of the brethren - are to be heard, "the calves of our lips" (Hos 14: 2), five words, fifteen words, whatever it is; and concurrently, the sisters providing pious support as loving Christ, loving what they are hearing, and loving what they are experiencing.

When we come to John 17, the great Priest is speaking to the Father. He is the great Priest, and how wonderful it is that the Lord Jesus shares things with His own. There is a sense in which He shares His priesthood with us. We read in John 15 about asking, as under the headship of Christ; asking the Father. That kind of asking is beyond what might occupy us most of the time in the way of care, and has to do with the testimony and these great things. We ask the Father and the Son to help us in the testimony, to help us impart something of Christ as we are near to the Spirit. We do not do this by trying but as something that has laid hold of us; so that "in that I now live in flesh, I live by faith, the faith of the Son of God who has loved me and has given Himself for me", Gal 2: 20. Have you got over to the life of Christ, and do you speak to the Father? Do you see yourself as the Father sees you? Do I see myself that way as in the life of Christ?

Our lives, as we speak of them, are subsumed by the wonderful life that speaks to heaven of Christ characteristically in the saints. How is this possible? It is not possible unless you have His Spirit. "As He is, so are we also are in the world", 1 John 4: 17. Is that imitating Christ? Not exactly (although we follow Him and the truth sets us free); it is having His Spirit. You could not be like Christ without His Spirit. What wonderful potential there is in having the Spirit of Christ. It is to be like Christ, and that is why we have His Spirit, to be like Him, as He is, so are we in this world.

This is a very great meditation, John 17. Keep in mind that this great Priest, in speaking to the Father, is the One who has declared God, "No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him", John 1: 18. The Father is prominent in that expression, no doubt it includes the Son as well, but from the place of affection which the Lord Jesus has He declares the Father.

Life was not known in the way that God meant it to be known until Christ was seen here in manhood - "In him was life, and the life was

the light of men", John 1: 4. What was that life all about? Bringing out the Father in declaration, a public matter, whoever took account of it, and there were those who did. There were those who went to be with the Lord the tenth hour of the day to get something of that touch, see John 1: 39.

Another scripture, affecting for you little ones and those of us who are babes in Christ is Matthew 11: 25. It is after the Lord Jesus had been to various places where most of His works of power were seen, yet the works and the power rejected because He was rejected. There was an issue in Capernaum. There were those who thought His saying was hard, and they "went away back", John 6: 60-66. Do you know a young brother or sister who has done that, or gone a way back? Yet, in grace, you account them according to them for their best days as among the brethren. What sorrow this is for younger ones, or any, to turn aside or go away back! The Lord came from that atmosphere of unbelief and it affected Him, as seen in Matthew 11 and in John 6. But, there were those like Peter who said, "to whom shall we go", v 68? Will you go off into the world, or will you ask the Lord where you shall go? I have been there (in the world); I am not preaching at you. You cannot go there and expect the true knowledge of the Father to fill your soul, for Christ is not going there with you, although He may go a way only to bring you back to the locality, Luke 24: 28 -33. You cannot take these precious things into the world. He speaks of the world in John 17, and He speaks of being hated there too. We may be in the world but not of it, and should not bear the moral character of what does not care for Him. When you sit down for the breaking of bread, do you contemplate that Christ was murdered here? Our link is with Him and we reverse that judgment; we are saying, 'He has put His claim in on me, sovereign love has laid hold of me, and I now have life in another Man and in the assembly, and I want His Spirit so that life can be expressed for the joy of heaven'.

He could say, coming from Capernaum, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes: yea, Father, for thus has it been well-pleasing in thy sight ... no one knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son is pleased to reveal him", Luke 10: 21, 22. The Father is the subject of revelation, the knowledge of Christ as the great instrument of God and the mediator between God and men, the great

redemptive work of the Lord Jesus making the way for men to come into relationship with God. It is all made possible through Christ, but the truth leads to the Father as the subject of revelation. He speaks to the Father in John 17, and He speaks of the Father's word, another aspect of the knowledge of the Father - His work, His hand, His house, His word. That is what the Lord says, "I have given them thy word". No doubt that speaks specifically of giving the Father's word to the apostles, but then He speaks of those who had believed based on their (the apostles') word. It is the Father's word as source of all. It is the Father's work coordinated with the Son and the Spirit; they are all One, in one direction, one thought, one counsel, one purpose. This is true abiding.

So, He speaks of the Father's word, and then goes on to say, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth: thy word is truth". He is speaking to the Father. The Father desires separation more than you and I do. We might take it up legally, which would not be exactly correct, because true sanctification is by the Spirit. The Lord no doubt had in mind the Father's word and what would continue here in the Lord's absence, involving the Spirit coming here as well. The Spirit sanctifies us. The Spirit sets us apart for holy things, the things of the Father and the things of Jesus Christ. The Lord could address the Father as 'Holy Father' and 'Righteous Father', and had in mind the enjoyment of sonship (for us) through sanctification of the Spirit. I believe the ministry speaks of sonship severally. It takes the great vessel of the assembly for sonship to come out and be expressed severally, JT vol 73 p254. Christ brings many sons to glory; into the area and atmosphere of the Father's house, (spiritually accessed now).

What I wanted to end with is the Father's heart. Mr Coates mentions that in His hymn

His hand, His house, His heart are free ...

Therefore, I read these verses where the glory of sonship comes to light. Also, "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Gal 4: 6. What nearness to the Father! Think of the words of the Lord Jesus, "Abba Father, all things are possible to thee: take away this cup from me; but not what *I* will, but what *thou* wilt", Mark 14: 36. He took the cup in view of the knowledge of the Father being appropriated by us, appreciated by us, enjoyed by us, and the Father's heart is in this. It says, "...and that thou hast loved them as

thou hast loved me". The Father's love and the enjoyment of the Father's love prepare us, young brethren, for deliverance in detail. Mr. Coates also said he did not have time for these things (of the world) any more, vol 31 p333. The Father's love had captured his heart, to be loved as Christ is loved. Have we taken that into our souls and have we responded? We will have an opportunity to respond in the service of praise tomorrow.

Then He says, "...that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them" - that is the Father's heart again but I think it is so that we can love the Lord Jesus similarly to the way the Father loves Him. That is a very great thought.

The standard of everything that God sets forth in the area of fruitfulness is very high, it is His own work as coming to light to honour and glorify Himself. I would like to be in it and I am sure that each one of us in this room, as we have the Spirit, would be stimulated to go in for the knowledge of the Father. May God bless the Word.

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