

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 79

October 1979

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DAILY WORSHIP

TRANQUILITY

THE CHILDREN'S THIRST

DAILY WORSHIP

2 Samuel 15: 30-32; Genesis 47: 28-31 Deuteronomy 26: 10,11

E.C.B. I wondered whether it would be profitable to us to inquire into the way in which worship enters into our lives, not altogether in what is collective but individually. I wonder whether worship sufficiently enters into our individual lives. Other scriptures could no doubt be referred to but these are familiar to the brethren and we often get the most help in familiar areas of the truth.

David worships in the presence of disaster. The fact that it was largely his own fault for more than one reason does not mitigate the fact that there was disaster. It is not only the disaster of the death of Amnon and the disaster of Absalom's insurrection; there is the further disaster, the betrayal by Ahithophel. It is as if "mine own familiar friend... hath lifted up his heel against me", (Ps 41: 9).

David gets that news, but as he goes away out of Jerusalem he goes up to the summit where, it says, "he worshipped God". I wonder how far we have learned worship in disaster. As soon as he worships he gets an ally.

Jacob worships at the end of experience. We could point to certain disasters in Jacob's life: he would never remember Shechem with favour. But in chapter 47 we have the product that God has been refining for quite a long time. Jacob goes through a lot of experience in which he is learning things, but once he starts going back to Bethel God starts putting a polish on the man, refining him.

In chapter 47 he is summing up his experience; he has one or two things yet to do by way of blessing but he is looking at the end of his life, and he worshipped. That is not worship in disaster; it is worship in the culmination of experience.

In Deuteronomy 26 it is worship as a result of prosperity, a circumstance in which we often forget God. It is not exactly individual - David worships as an individual, Jacob worships as an individual; the Israelite in this chapter worships in the setting of the divine system; but it is still, thou shalt worship (v 10), it is the

individual worshipping in prosperity. I wondered whether it would be helpful and perhaps stimulating to consider the way in which worship should thus enter into our individual lives in relation to these circumstances of disaster and experience and prosperity.

A.B.P. In that way even failure, if we get to God about it, can be turned into spiritual profit, and God gets an inheritance in His people through the acceptance of His way and will.

E.C.B. That is right, but I wonder whether the idea of worship does not take us a little beyond that. David in 2 Samuel 15 is not exactly presented as getting to God about the circumstances; he is in the circumstances and to all intents and purposes overwhelmed by them, but he worships. It brings out that even in disaster God was before him as his object. He is not seeking a remedy for the situation, although no doubt, as the Psalms bring out, he was trusting in God for the remedy, but he was worshipfully before God even in the depth of the circumstances. That is something that I could not say very much about from experience, save this that the Lord sometimes brings us through times of anxiety and stress and you get an impression, and more than that often, that the Lord is favourable to you, then you stop praying about it, you just worship even in thanksgiving in the light of divine activity.

G.H. "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away", Job 1: 21.

E.C.B. That is a very interesting connection. I was talking to a sister just now in regard to our beloved sister in Toronto recently widowed and the way in which that experience has to be gone through by so many - that the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah. I think that is very similar to David here. Job's circumstances were inherently personal and David's had a much wider bearing - they bore on all Israel - but as the man responsible in the situation he worshipped, and as so on as he worshipped the tide turned. I think that is a lesson for us.

A.B.P. Would the fact that he sent the ark back be an indication of how his thoughts were running?

E.C.B. Yes, that the ark should be in its proper place. Yet it is interesting that David is not hindered from worshipping by the fact that the ark is not with him. I think that brings out much to do with the individual side - that you do not have to be in the meeting to worship. The question is whether, when we are under circumstances of pressure and of stress, our hearts go up to God because of what He is, and we are in a sense independent (I use the word carefully) of the brethren, but your heart is towards God worshipfully even in the midst of disaster. We have been through much, all the brethren here have been through much and a number bear the marks of it visibly, but is worship there?

A.S.H. The man in John 9 did homage. Would that be on the same line?

E.C.B. It would in a way, and we could bring in a number of other persons. Although the word 'worship' does not occur all that frequently in the Bible (it occurs quite a lot in the Psalms, and in fact quite a lot of the times it occurs it is in relation to idolatry that they worshipped other gods) the man in John 9 was under the very tender leading of Jesus. His eyes were opened, and then one thing and another was opened up to him; then he did Him homage. That might fit in more to the sense of worshipping in the presence of prosperity.

G.D.W. Is there a difference between the meaning of the word 'worship' in the Old Testament and in the New? I am thinking of the way the Lord spoke in John 4: "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (v 23): that seems to be an advance for the Christian on what was hitherto available.

E.C.B. That is true; in taking up the types we of course translate them into Christianity with all the additional advantages of Christianity. The emphasis I think in John 4 is that God is a Spirit and if you are going to worship that God then you do it in spirit and truth. That was revelation to the Jews. Of course it was a miraculous revelation to the woman; but that scripture shows that the desire of the Father is for worshippers. I wonder sometimes whether

we confine that too much to the meeting; we think that the worship in John 4 is for the meeting but it is for the individual too.

G.D.W. You only have to read Mr Darby's spiritual songs to see individual worship. Some of these have been turned into hymns and made 'we' instead of 'I' but they are from his individual experience.

E.C.B. That is right: I am not in any way seeking to diminish worship collectively; rather do I feel that it would be enriched if we had more sense of what it is to worship individually. It seems to me in these scriptures as if in the ordinary sequence of events a man's heart goes up to God on account of what He is.

A.B.P. Therefore worship in the assembly is not restricted to the impressions received as together: the wealth as indicated in the man with the basket of first-fruits is as a result of planting and reaping in principle.

E.C.B. That is so; worship in the assembly is, as you say, enriched on account of what we have acquired from God in our private circumstances. The reference in Philipians to worship bears on that: we "worship by the Spirit of God", chap 3: 3. Philipians is not in character an assembly epistle; it has to do with Christianity worked out in individuals as heavenly people down here. But we worship by the Spirit of God; Paul would do that in prison and you can almost hear him doing it in the first chapter; he is praising God because people are preaching the gospel.

A.B.P. Is there not a distinctive detail in relation to worship in the assembly. Worship individually would be just that, but worship in the assembly embraces the corporate feelings of the saints and there has to be spiritual status or growth to be sensitive and able to express the corporate feelings to God.

E.C.B. That is right. What you are saying is very much related to our understanding that there is one Spirit. Brethren might take the trouble some time to look up how many times Paul refers to 'one Spirit'; and that bears on what we have collectively. But the one Spirit also enters into my individual response to God in

circumstances in which I may be under great oppression, but the Spirit is always able to break through the circumstances.

C.S.E. I was wondering if the state in which David was here would help us to arrive at such a state in ourselves, turning us to God. It says he wept, he had his head covered, he went barefoot, and all the people with him covered every man his head. "Then said David, Jehovah, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. And it came to pass, when David had come to the summit, where he worshipped God". All that leads up to a state of emptiness in himself, of nothingness, bereft of everything else, and it turns him to God. Is that the way we arrive at the sense of worship ourselves?

E.C.B. It may be. All that may enter into it; the spirit of Mr Darby's hymn, 'That we our nothingness may know' (No 87) is something that we could well devote ourselves to acquiring more knowledge of, but I would be very sorry if my worrying whether I was in the right state to worship God in my circumstances hindered the spontaneity that there is with David here. It did not matter what David's state was - we have a description of it - but he worshipped God. In whatever circumstances you may be of pressure, even of disaster, does your heart not go up to God in worship? Or do you say, Am I in the right state to be in the spirit of worship? I hope you do not go through that long process. It may be that the worship immediately changes the state.

B.H.W. We worship because of what God is, not because of what we are.

E.C.B. That is very helpful. Sometimes we worry so much about what we are that God does not get the portion He might do from us.

We wonder whether we are good enough, or better enough, or repented enough, but the thing is that the heart goes up to God because of what He is. I wonder, in the many circumstances of pressure and sorrow that there are on the brethren - we have disaster all around us - whether there is this ability to rise in worship out of it.

B.T. Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather - a relative. I wondered whether this thought would enter David's mind and that what is happening here in the ways of God would cause him in self-judgment and humility to take on the responsibility for letting the whole position down. So he is arriving at something in which he is able to worship.

E.C.B. I think that is so. That connects with an expression we often use about eating the sin-offering. What Mr Elliott drew attention to in this grief and even the external appearance of sorrow can all be related to David eating the sin-offering. But I think the sin-offering provides the basis of worship and of there being something by way of increase for God. If in the midst of disaster one can feel one's own responsibility for it and still worship God, then God is getting something very rich.

J.A.P. In Hebrews 10 where we are told to approach - "let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water" (v 22) - is there a righteous basis in the blood to approach God so that that is settled. Then the next thing is how much am I washing? Would you think that David actually was in a good state here although in outward reverse?

E.C.B. I think that is right. What I do not want the brethren to get engaged with is their state but with worship. We can get tied up with thinking about our state. What you say is absolutely right and we should increasingly rely on it, that the blood before God provides a basis on which everything is clear. We may not always remember that, but the fact that the heart can in liberty go up to God shows that there is something inherent in the person that knows that the way is clear if he can only break through. But you have had quite a lot of sorrow, you have at the moment quite a lot of pressure; how about the worship, does that come out?

J.A.P. I am helped by what you say. It is a poor thing if we are not learning God in these reverses, or whatever way we want to speak of them - His discipline or His ways with us.

E.C.B. So what Dr Waskey said helps us, that in the sorrow, whatever it may be - and we all have sorrows - you are not first thinking about yourself, you are about God. Once you start thinking about God you find that you have a changed view of all the circumstances.

A.B.P. Is the experience here more related to the continuing government of God rather than the sin? Psalm 51 seems to indicate that he had thoroughly faced that matter, but it is another matter to find God's hand resting upon us in government, which proves later to be in David's favour, whereas here it is the reverse. The acceptance of God's government is a matter that we have to face in addition to our state, is it not?

E.C.B. It is; and that usually bears on us in some matter affecting our circumstances, or in our families, or even among our brethren. Brethren are most helped by looking at the government of God as the government of God when it is favourable and looking at the government of God as discipline when it seems to be unfavourable, because otherwise we get the impression that God's government is against us.

A.B.P. I think that is very important, and David's experience in Mahanaim brings in the balance, does it not (see 2 Sam 17: 27)?

E.C.B. That is so.

L.MacF. So the knowledge of God is essential. At Ziklag "David strengthened himself in Jehovah his God", 1 Sam 30: 6. Do you think that leads on to what we have here?

E.C.B. It does. That experience is a long way back; a great deal had happened since then. You speak of our knowledge of God; the question is, do we know God well enough to be able to turn to Him without thinking? It appears that that is what David did here; he received this terrible news that his own familiar friend had lifted up his heel against him and he knew God well enough to turn to Him immediately without thinking. I suppose David would say "All things work together for good to those who love God", Rom 8: 28.

T.E.D. It says "when David had come to the summit". Is that part of the exercise of which you are speaking? I was also thinking about Habakkuk who speaks about "my high places", chap 3: 19. It would be exercise of soul that would reach something with God which would bring out this response.

E.C.B. I think that is right. We often speak of David coming to the summit here as if he was, as we say, reaching something, but it may also be presented in a certain sense negatively, that things were now at their very worst, nothing more could be added to make things worse, the worst was at its summit, and now David worships God. I think that is to help us. But I just add this for encouragement: that as soon as he worships God, the man who is going to be the clue to the salvation of the situation is right there. His spirit is the same as David's; the spirit of Hushai in the end of verse 32 is the same as the spirit of David in verse 30 to which Mr Elliott drew attention, but he is the salvation of the situation. Do you not think that is helpful?

T.E.D. They often say the darkness is darkest just before the dawn but that is when the morning star arises.

E.C.B. It was by no means clear how God was going to use Hushai for the salvation of the situation and yet the salvation was there. If there had been the spiritual intelligence it would have been seen straight away that at the moment of worship God brought in the remedy.

A.B.P. When the summit was reached on the cross - to apply the expression - the Lord Jesus said "My God, my God", Mark 15: 34.

While the question is "Why hast thou forsaken me?" I think we should be impressed with the fact that He said "My God, my God". It is appreciation of and oneness with the feelings of God?

E.C.B. I am sure it is. We are very careful how we speak about the words on the cross, but in a sense that is a worshipful expression as taking account of what the greatness of God is, thrown the more into relief by the reality of His being made sin.

C.F.D. The prophetic side comes into the Psalms as to that experience: "And thou art holy, thou that dwellest amid the praises of

Israel", Ps 22: 3. This shows prophetically the feelings of Christ and the mind of Christ at that time.

E.C.B. Exactly. And then the next time Jesus uses that expression it is "my God and your God" (John 20: 17) and it has in view the whole response to God as revealed.

P.L.D. Would the apostle's breaking out even in writing the scripture fit in with your thought? In Romans 9: 5 he says "the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen". He is breaking out privately even when he is writing. Just before that he mentioned that he had wished to be accursed, but that was past, he was not wishing that at the present.

E.C.B. So what we are speaking about is very much related to our references from time to time to the doxology. It is, how do you break out of disaster? In disaster are we burying our heads and saying, Awake, why sleepest thou, Lord (Ps 44: 23). Or in the midst of disaster is there worship? My impression from this scripture is that as soon as there is worship there is relief. I do not say these things to test the brethren but rather to encourage them. I repeat, we all have our exercises and sorrows, but I believe that this incident with David brings out that the way through is to be before God on account of what God is and worship Him in that setting.

G.D.W. We are not given the words exactly but in Job it says "Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he had prayed for his friends" (chap 42: 10) and you wonder if such a prayer would not involve an aspect of worship. It does not say it, but implicitly it seems that he had the thought of blessing as far as his friends were concerned - you pray for your brother.

E.C.B. That is right. Job did pray for his friends; they had made all his troubles seem worse. But he prayed for them and in the end fellowship was fully restored in that company - every one gave him a gold ring. The brethren will remember what Mr Taylor said, that that is fellowship. There should be a good trade in gold rings among the brethren; every one should be promoting the reality of fellowship with one another. I do not want to say anything about the piece of

money, but the spirit of giving the gold ring should be amongst the brethren. I still would like the brethren to keep worship more in their minds than prayer. There is a distinction between those things as we all know.

B.H.W. I was wondering if you wanted to distinguish not only prayer but between praise and worship.

E.C.B. In a certain sense there is not very much difference, but I think that worship implies the spirit going out towards God impressed with what He is. Praise, on the whole, has in it elements referring to specific activities of God and praising Him on account of them.

G.D.W. It is interesting how Paul's experience is worded: "in praying, were praising God with singing", Acts 16: 25.

E.C.B. They were worshipfully in the prison. It is a good thing if in prayer our hearts can, as we say, turn to worship. Sometimes we can pray so long about things that the worship never gets included. I want the brethren to go away with some desire to worship God in their circumstances.

C.F.D. I think what you said in your opening remarks - getting through to God because of who He is and what He is - is extremely important. Praise can relate to many things, as you say the detail of things; praise can work out in a kind of a controlled way even amongst the saints, but you worship a divine Person because of who He is, do you not? Do you not feel the need of that, specially as you work out your circumstances in the wilderness setting? You come to understand God as to who He is and that brings this outburst, do you think?

E.C.B. I do. Mr Darby says in hymn 76, 'In the desert God will teach thee What the God that thou hast found'. He does not say, He will teach you what it says in Deuteronomy 8 but, 'In the desert God will teach thee What the God that thou hast found'. Once you touch that you worship.

J.A.P. You referred to Psalm 44. Psalm 45 is "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him" (v 11). These are not set together in vain by the

Spirit.

E.C.B. Then Psalm 44 is quoted in Romans 8: "we have been reckoned as sheep for slaughter" (v 36). In the psalm it is followed by "why sleepest thou, Lord" (v 23) but in Romans 8 by "But in all these things we more than conquer through him that has loved us" (v 37). There is the spirit of worship in the soul.

C.F.D. Would not the experience of the wilderness help us as to our capacity to speak to God about Himself in the service? We get into the presence of the Father and of God, and we find that we are extremely limited as to what we can say to the Father about Himself and as to God about Himself. Would this not give us expansion in our understanding and appreciation?

E.C.B. I think so. It would enrich it, and what you had learned from God today you could draw on tomorrow, and the spirit of worship that you had today would enter into our collective worship tomorrow, as Mr Parker was suggesting. But there is just one thing to be added, that if you do touch the spirit of worship it clings to you. You get into circumstances that are pressing, get into disaster and it overwhelms you, but you worship God and that spirit of worship clings to you much more than you realise. It is quite difficult to shake off once you have touched something like that and thus you have the means of carrying it forward.

G.D.W. Moses' face shining?

E.C.B. Yes, he had just come out from the presence of God then.

C.F.D. Therefore as we begin the day in the household setting, if we get a touch of this in our relations with God we would have a sense of it clinging to us as we proceed through the day, giving a positive glow to things.

E.C.B. I think that. It would be a question of what all your garments smelled of. All His garments, myrrh and aloes and cassia, is the spirit of worship clinging to you. Perhaps the disaster is still there but the heart that has found God worshipfully, not just as a resource

but worshipfully, has a new resource and it has the means to the end of the disaster.

B.T. "We worship what we know" (John 4: 22); and David knew God well enough to know that He was not going to support Absalom regardless of his great loss of Ahithophel.

E.C.B. That is right. Sometimes we are a bit slow in coming to that, we think that what appears overwhelming is going to overwhelm, but give us a little time to settle and we come to it that God will not support that in any case and our hearts are worshipful.

A.B.P. Do you think that this line of things must have been in the mind of the Lord in John 17 when He said "And this is the eternal life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (v 3)?

E.C.B. Yes, I think so. John's first epistle really ends on that note, it directs you to the true God and eternal life, as if John saw what would be needed in the day of breakdown in which he was then writing, the need of proper links in love among the brethren, but also the true God and eternal life. But what is eternal life? "The eternal life, that they should know thee... and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent". Once you know God your heart goes out to Him. A lot of our trouble in difficulties is that we are searching for God when we should know Him and spontaneously rise to Him.

B.H.W. David was praying here; and in Philippians 4: 6 it says "with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"; and then it speaks of the peace of God. When the peace of God is thus enjoyed, that would call forth worship, would it not?

E.C.B. It would. The difficulty for us perhaps is to arrive at that peace in the midst of circumstances that are disastrous: but I think that if we can touch worship quickly we shall find that the peace is there, because the worship is in an area where there is nothing to disturb it.

C.S.E. In Matthew 11 the Lord began to reproach the cities in which most of His works of power had taken place, and at that time He

says "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth" (v 25). It was a good example for us how the Lord just took off to the Father, so to speak, in the midst of the depressed state of things.

E.C.B. That is another helpful illustration. It illustrates what Dr Waskey was referring to and what I was saying in reply to him, that as soon as worship is touched in the spirit, rest comes into the soul.

But perhaps we could just look at Jacob who worships at the end of experience. This is not at the end of just one experience but at the end of a lifetime's experience, and in a certain sense, both from this scripture and from Hebrews 11, the last thing Jacob does is to worship God. As I said earlier, there are other things added after this chapter but chapter 47 foreshadows the end. I wonder from cumulative experience with us all - and there are some brethren here who are really quite old - how much is worship now entering into our lives? Jacob is quite concerned about all kinds of things; he wants to be buried properly; then he is concerned about blessing the sons, and he is concerned about the end of days, he is concerned about Joseph's sons, but worship lies over chapter 48 and chapter 49.

A.B.P. He speaks about being shepherded all his life long, and David also speaks about God delivering him out of all his distress; these men who knew what worship really was had accumulated the knowledge of God.

E.C.B. That is what adds to richness in the worship. You meet brethren sometimes, and sometimes it peculiarly comes out in sisters, to whom you only have to speak to realise that the spirit of worship is right on top in them. The spirit of worship in an old believer is something very refined and valuable. But then there is no reason why it should be confined to such. We all have a lifetime's experience, the youngest person here has a lifetime's experience; now is worship coming out of that? You come to the end of a day - and Jacob worshipped.

L.MacF. In the record in Hebrews 11 it says it is by faith. This seems to be the great need with us, do you think?

E.C.B. Yes, I do. I think Hebrews 11 is written because faith would be so much needed among us; it is a very short commodity sometimes. But each of us has accumulated a degree of experience up to the present moment. Now what is our spirit in that? Are we worshipping as a result of that? Are we murmuring? Because many murmur. The spirit of murmuring is very near the surface in many of us, wishing that things had been otherwise, the spirit of Rebecca "why am I thus?", Gen 25: 22. That spirit is not far from us sometimes, but the spirit of Jacob is worship. Jacob in this part of Genesis is a refined and polished man. God has been doing things with him in order to bring about that maturity that God could rejoice in. You get a sense that God took him. You could not quite literally say that, but God was pleased with the product of His own work and He took Jacob. But He took a worshipper; that seems to me a very fine thing.

A.Macd. The fact that he is called Israel here would confirm what you are saying. I wish I knew the experience of being Israel; there is more Jacob in us than we realise.

E.C.B. There is. Israel, you mean, is the princely side, a prince with God. The supplanter and all that kind of thing is what is natural to us all. It is not just seen in some; it is natural to us all to be a supplanter and look after our own advantage. But here you really have royalty in Jacob and it says he worshipped. I think God had a worshipper who was fit for God. Jacob does not even have to build an altar here. He had built altars before, he had arrived at things progressively in regard to his altars, but he is too old and feeble now to build an altar; but he can worship and he worshipped. I would encourage the brethren as to whether our experience is leading us in this direction.

J.A.P. Would you say something about Mr Darby's note that it is on the top of his staff. Would victory be one thought in it?

E.C.B. Yes. You get that in Hebrews 11: 21: "worshipped on the top of his staff". Jacob is now superior to what he had depended on.

A.B.P. Is it the thought of summit?

E.C.B. It is a summit, yes. But I think it is that he was now superior to what he had depended on. Going back to what you said earlier about government and the thought of discipline; the staff was for discipline, was it not? It reflected the government of God, that he had wrestled with God and was injured; he would bear that mark to his grave and he was dependent on his staff, but now he is superior to what he depended on and in that spirit he worships. I think this is something very fine.

G.H. It says about Enoch that he walked with God and "he was not, for God took him", Gen 5: 24. Would Enoch be in a worshipful attitude as he walked with God?

E.C.B. I think Enoch represents more the idea of communion than of worship. Expressions have been used in everyday language that God found Enoch such good company that He just took him home with Him. Communion between Enoch and God was like that - would that we knew that better. But many days Jacob had not walked with God, but in grace God walked with Jacob. Even in his departure and his weakness and all his history on many of the days God came down and shepherded him, shepherded him for another day. You can think of God in His fatherly way feeling, Well, there is Jacob again, we have got to do more work with him. Just as we sometimes feel about our sons or our families, just as God must have felt about many of us in His fatherly way, Now I have to do more work on that man or that woman. God came down and went with him, the angel shepherded him but God had a worshipper.

A.B.P. God said "I am with thee... and will bring thee again", Gen 28: 15. And then when he was going down to Egypt He said "Fear not... I will go down with thee"; and speaking of Joseph, "and Joseph shall put his hand on thine eyes", as though his being put to sleep was in view. I thought of that in relation to what you were saying, that God took him - "asleep through Jesus", 1 Thess 4: 14.

E.C.B. You would think of that. Mr Ware was guarding a little while ago about bringing too much of the New Testament into the Old, but you get that sense in regard to Jacob, as you say, of his falling

asleep, being put to sleep through Jesus. But the man is at peace.

It does not matter what his history has been, the man is at peace, and a man at peace, as Dr Waskey said, is a worshipper. He closes his life with worship. One thing that is quite a sorrow to see is that some saints who are gravely ill and you think the Lord might take them (and perhaps they think it too) do not quite seem to have arrived at this. The valley of the shadow seems something that they have to go through in order to arrive at it. Then it is marvellous how in the Lord's grace He brings them through the valley of the shadow, being with them in it, and they are revived and at peace and they die worshippers.

P.L.D. We had a brother just ninety whom the Lord took and he was weak but he spoke a lot about glory. He spoke about the God of glory and the Father of glory; those things seemed to be filling his mind and soul.

E.C.B. It is the end of a lifetime's experience and God gets something rich out of the man. But then none of us here today knows the day of our death. Are we worshipping? Are we worshipfully ready to go, if I could put it like that?

G.D.W. The first part of Israel's blessing: "Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father" (Gen 49: 2) seems like something coming from this area of worship which is clinging to him.

E.C.B. I think that is right. As with so many of these things, would that we knew them better; but to come out from the presence of God where one has been with only God before one! Do you think here that Jacob was thinking about Pharaoh? I doubt whether the man ever crossed his mind. What Jacob is thinking about is God, and his spirit is towards God in worship. What a way to die, if I may put it like that, to die in this kind of victory that he was a worshipper!

B.T. At the end of chapter 45 he said "I will go and see him before I die". The shadow of death you were speaking of was over him there really, but then his spirit revived, as you were saying about some of these brethren.

E.C.B. Yes, that is right; and at the end he worshipped. "He gathered his feet into the bed" and he died in very great dignity; but what Jacob has before him is God. I think that as soon as the soul has God before him at the end of experience that one worships.

O.L.L. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians says "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God", chap 6: 16. Would you explain what 'the Israel of God' means.

E.C.B. That is an expression that is intended to embrace Christians. Paul is lifting the Galatians out of the Israel that was under the law to what you might call the new Israel in relation to God where the blessing of Abraham would come on to them fully.

C.F.D. The idea of a finished product seems to come out very much in the history of Jacob. There were one hundred and thirty years in which he goes through so much, but then in the last seventeen years of his life, while we do not get a lot of detail, there always seems to be the idea of what is spiritual and what is prophetic shining through in the things that he has to say. It is as if God now had brought this man to the point where he was a finished product. And do you not think that this should characterise our own lives?

E.C.B. I think that very much; and I would seek to encourage the brethren to have God before them to the extent that their hearts are towards Him in worship whatever the circumstances may be. As I have said, we all have a lifetime behind us, even the youngest person, and every one of us has a lifetime of experience. Now what is that experience in relation to God and what is it producing? If I may bring this into fairly practical terms because that sometimes focuses things for us, Jacob lived about twice as long as any of us might expect to live, knowing our breath is in God's hand. Now the last seventeen years were the years of polish; everyone who thinks they are in their last eight and a half years ought to be submitting to polishing, and one very good way of being polished is to worship God because you are always going into the presence of God and

shedding what is not suited for it. And God's touch on you as you are in His presence helps to refine you and put the polish on.

C.F.D. Do you think that comes out in the very delicate, affectionate way that he speaks to Joseph when he says "I know, my son, I know", Gen 48: 19? It is a priestly touch coming out, a man who had experience with God and who knows God knows the mind of God as to what he is speaking of at that moment.

E.C.B. Yes. He knows how to treat children too. They are brought out from Joseph's knees and he does not talk to them as if they were old brothers; he says, I will bless you. But if it comes to history that needs to be spoken of clearly, then Jacob is still the man to do it: "Simeon and Levi... instruments of violence", but it is a worshipper who is saying that; he is really giving God's measure of their history.

A.R.S. Experience would give us an increased appreciation of the faithfulness of God; would that help us in regard to worship?

E.C.B. Yes. All that relates to the degree to which we have come to know God. Saying we have the knowledge of God is very easy but how true is it? It is the means of growth according to Paul: "growing by the true knowledge of God", Col 1: 10.

Perhaps we could just have a word about Deuteronomy because the worship there is not in relation to disaster or to experience, it is in relation to prosperity. Israel's failure was that in their prosperity they forgot God; they were dependent so they were blessed, they became independent. and then they were not blessed. That is a trap many of us may fall into, that dependence brings blessing and we then think all the blessing is due to our own efforts and become independent and then God has to judge us. But Deuteronomy 26 is blessing. It does not say who this man is or what kind of area of the land he has or anything like that; he is just an ordinary Israelite and he has had a prosperous time because he has been cultivating the things of God, things that God had prepared for those that love Him, and he fills his basket and comes before God.

He puts it down before the priest, he knows all about his history, he is entirely free of his history -what it is to be able to speak of your

history objectively! - and he comes before God and puts down his basket and worships. Now this is any Israelite, any brother or any sister in the sense of prosperity worshipping God.

A.B.P. He was told what to say up to a point but then he is to worship; he is not told what to say in worship.

E.C.B. That would be the Spirit in him, would it not? I remember you speaking in Buckie about the prophet that was told to give the people the words to speak; that was by way of repentance. The form of things is set out but then the man worships, as if to say, I have told you what to say, now what are you going to add to it? And in prosperity God is to be worshipped.

G.D.W. Why does the instruction include the house, the Levite and the stranger?

E.C.B. The whole divine system is there. It says "all the good that Jehovah thy God hath given to thee, and to thy house". Now every Israelite would be very familiar with what belonged to his house because if he kept the passover in his mind he would always be thinking of his house, and we should think about our house too.

Then the Levite implies what is going to be for God. A tenth of the product was given to the priestly system and this is really what the Levites lived on. If the people were prosperous the Levites were prosperous; if the people did not cultivate the land the Levites would become impoverished and the service of God would suffer. "And the stranger that is in thy midst" is just opening the door for persons to come in.

G.D.P. It says "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment", John 12: 3. I was thinking of what you said as to what clings to us; it permeates the atmosphere. Would that fit in in some little way?

E.C.B. It was rather that scripture that was in my mind along with Psalm 45. And here this man, you could say in his simplicity, gathers up the fruits of his land and takes them into God and worships in the light of it. Now, brethren, do we know enough about prosperity to worship God with it? Who thinks we do? I do.

J.A.P. That is very fine because I can say for one that I rejoice in certain good things God has given us in our day. For instance, how the Lord is helping us in three-day meetings and in fellowship meetings, and there is food; and there is the prophetic word and that is to lead to worship. We do not even deserve it but He is giving it to us.

E.C.B. That is right, and we want to look at things that way. We go away and say, Well, we had quite a good time, I enjoyed the words.

What did God get? If I could just touch on a practical point, the brother who prays at the end of the ministry meeting does not have to give a summary of the words. What he has to do is to address God for all the good that Jehovah has done to you, that is all; and that helps to make the brother that prays at the end brief.

T.E.D. Is there a beautiful touch at the end of the book of Ruth? "And they called his name Obed", chap 4: 17: it is the culmination of experience of a young and an old person.

E.C.B. I am very interested that you refer to that because in a certain way Obed summarizes what we have had before us. The beginning of Ruth is disaster, the middle of Ruth is experience, the end of Ruth is prosperity and there you get a worshipper. This is the track that brings you to David and then brings you to Christ. But you get it all in that book. That is very helpful and very confirmatory of what we have been saying.

B.T. Joseph does not summarise what his father said; he did not ask to be taken to the cave of Machpelah, but he links on with this in his bones being carried when they went; that is, his own experience.

E.C.B. Exactly. Joseph, I think, had gathered up things from his father much greater than you might have thought. You would have thought in Joseph's day that Jacob would learn from Joseph, but Joseph never ceased to learn from Jacob. The respect he had for his father is remarkable; it is a good lesson for everybody. He learned things from Jacob right until the end and what you are saying illustrates that.

A.B.P. That is supported by what is said in John 4, the parcel that was given to Joseph and a well of Jacob's was there.

E.C.B. I have connected that before with the end of Deuteronomy 33: "The fountain of Jacob, in a land of corn and new wine" (v 28); that is John 4. There was only one Man there that knew it but He knew it.

A.B.P. I was thinking of the way Joseph's appreciation of Jacob would be seen in that. It was not that a well of Joseph's was there; it was a well of Jacob's, he would maintain that in view of his father.

E.C.B. And it is carried right down. It is interesting that in Deuteronomy 33 it says "The fountain of Jacob"; it does not say the fountain of Joseph or anyone else, but "The fountain of Jacob, in a land of corn and new wine".

R.N.H. The woman in John 4 says, after the Lord spoke a prophetic word to her, "Come, see a man" (v 29). Would you say that ministry would lead you to Christ in a worshipful attitude?

E.C.B. I think that that is right and desirable to keep before us. If we now have God before us in the different settings that we have spoken of this morning, we meet Him in Christ and the heart is led through Christ by one Spirit to the Father in whatever circumstances it may be, because that is the only way of access.

A.B.P. So it is "the only true God, and Jesus Christ", John 17: 3.

E.C.B. Yes; did not Mr Taylor say about that, it is the true God and the true Man?

P.L.D. Would bringing this basket lead to adjustment if necessary? Because in Matthew 5 (see v 23), as bringing the gift it is there that you might be reminded of something. I do not want to bring in the negative side but divine Persons are faithful and if something needs adjustment what better place is there than in the presence of God to find it out?

E.C.B. I think that is helpful because that bears again on the matter the Lord is speaking to us about as to our general relations with one another. Matthew 5 bears directly on that. You could not bring this

in Deuteronomy 26 and be out at elbows with your brother. I have an impression that the basket really represents those interwoven relationships among the saints that provide something secure in which things can be brought to God.

A.B.P. They had that at Damascus.

E.C.B. They had one ready. I think, brethren, that we do know enough about prosperity to be ready to worship God in it, and I just had some thoughts as to whether we might see that worship is very much more an objective in our lives, especially individually, than I think most of us really allow for. If the Lord encourages us in that, God will be enriched by it.

BROOKLYN NY

9 December 1978

TRANQUILITY

E.C.Burr

2 Samuel 7: 1-7, 18, 19, 28, 29

I have just read a few verses from this chapter, beloved, in order to cover the scope of it without reading it all, although it is a delightful and profitable chapter if it were all read. We have recently in our local meeting been reading in this part of Samuel, and I would like with the Spirit's help to be able to extend an impression I gathered up there, desiring that it may be for the general benefit of the saints here.

One thing that always interests me is the general structure of Scripture. We do not always understand it, we do not often even look for it; we go from chapter to chapter and say, we read chapter 3 last week, is it chapter 4? and we do not fully pick up that Scripture has a structure. It is written by the Spirit of God, and it is not written haphazardly, it is not written as jottings as it were of what happened from day to day; the Scriptures are written with a structure by the Spirit of God. And while this chapter occurs here and in Chronicles at roughly the same point, one is led to wonder whether it is actually written in historical order, because I would think that not everything in chapter 8 followed after this. Some of it may have come before, some of it after, the exercise there and in this chapter may in some sense have been parallel, but the Spirit has put this chapter where it is. And the chapter occurs in this historical book with a lot of history behind, a lot of sorrowful history, that must have been a burden to any sensitive person. Saul was dead and David had lamented in a

lamentation over him and Jonathan that still touches hearts deeply, the lamentation over a man and his son who had perished in the battle but whom David did not cease to regard as Jehovah's anointed. If I may just interpose a sentence, I think that the Lord is speaking to us constantly about the nature of the regard that we have for believers having the Spirit with whom we are yet not able to walk, and I commend to the brethren the sense of regarding such in the light of the anointing. Do not let us fail in that. But Saul was dead and Asahel was dead and Abner was dead, and Ishbosheth whom Abner had promoted politically was dead, and there was sore war between the house of David and the house of Saul; David becoming continually greater, but the war was there. David had now the allegiance of both Judah and Israel but there was still trouble with the Jebusites and there was still trouble with the Philistines, and there was the incident of bringing up the ark on a new cart. As I say, if you read this book up to chapter 6 you would find that there was plenty to trouble any person sensitive before God as to how things ought to be.

Then this chapter is introduced as a kind of oasis of tranquillity - a very blessed thing. It says the king dwelt in his house and Jehovah had given him rest from all his enemies - a time of tranquillity, the trouble behind. There were troubles yet to come; in chapter 8 there is trouble with Syrians - and Ammon and Edom and Philistines and Hadadezer, one after another David has to deal with as he extends his dominions, but in this chapter you have a chapter of rest. I wonder, beloved, whether any of us have the experience of touching a chapter of rest. I think that the Lord would desire to give us the experience of tranquillity. It is not that we will be apart from exercise but I think that the Lord would long that the saints should have a chapter of tranquillity. I am sure that any person with God desires that too, that there should be a chapter - and actually in the grace of God it is a long chapter - of tranquillity. It is not a chapter under the judges when the land had rest for forty ears; this is just an experience on the way. There is much yet to happen, there is a lot of trouble yet to come into David's life. I do not prophesy that God is

going to give us a great deal more trouble; may we be preserved from it! One wonders what stamina we have to stand up to more trouble of the sorrowful kind that we have had. But there is a chapter of tranquillity. Beloved, would you like a chapter of tranquillity? What would you do with it? Would you disturb it? You say, Things are fairly quiet, now we can take up this and we can take up that. Here is this nice, smooth, restful pool of water and here are some lovely stories that we can throw into it that make beautiful rings that keep running out to the surface we will disturb things if we can. Is that what you like to do? That is the kind of thing that Abner and Joab were good at; they took the young men down to the pool and they said, Let us have sport, and most of the young men died. What a tragedy! Beloved, we do not want to be like that. If God gives us a moment of tranquillity let us use it as God would have us use it. It may be that not all the brethren would feel with me that the Lord does desire the saints to have such a moment. May I, for the encouragement of the brethren, and for such influence as I may be able to bear, say that I firmly believe the Lord would desire to give the saints seeking to walk in the truth a chapter of tranquillity - I believe that. Beloved, let us all believe it; let us commit ourselves to it. I know that there are exercises, in fact information comes to me one way or another from, I was going to say, all parts of the world, and in a certain sense I know something about nearly every exercise that pervades among the brethren at the present moment - perhaps you do too - but I still believe that the Lord would give the saints a chapter of tranquillity. And beloved, how will you use it? How would we use it? As soon as there is tranquillity David thinks about God.

Think of that! As soon as his enemies are quiet and there is rest, David's mind goes to God. I am afraid that it may be that in a time of tranquillity my mind first goes to myself, and maybe yours does.

Maybe you think, Now things are quiet there is time to think about this or that, and perhaps above all when we analyse it we find that we are thinking about ourselves. But as soon as there is quiet David thinks about God. Beloved, are we ready for that? One wonders even as we speak together in the reading as we have had it today what capacity there is with us to think about God. It often seems that

there is plenty of capacity to think about administration and all its implications, but, beloved, what capacity is there to think about God, and to think of providing things for God? I know that David was adjusted in this chapter, but his first thoughts were for God, and what was suitable for God, and that things might be better for God: all this when tranquillity came over the land, every enemy for the moment stilled. As soon as that came about David's mind goes, if I can apply the scripture, to making things better for God. Beloved, are we prepared for that? Are our minds on that channel? There are many ways in which it is open to us to do that. For instance in tranquillity, as having God before us and the desire that there might be more for Him and things more suitable for Him, we might have to think about ourselves and adjust ourselves in this detail or that detail and the presence of God is the best place to do it: The interchange of the sitting room, and that kind of thing, does not always promote advance in the soul and thinking for one's self does not promote advance in the soul. It is thinking for God and how things could be better for Him that David's mind turns to straightaway when God has given him rest from all his enemies round about.

Now I commend this to the brethren, if the Lord is in His grace giving us a time of rest. Think of the long time of rest, known in this city better than anywhere else, that the brethren had between, if I may put it in a certain sense, the death of Mr Raven and the death of Mr Taylor. Think of some fifty years of ministry in peace. Conflict, certainly, but you could not read the ministry to find out about the conflict; you are pretty well dependent on the memory of those still alive who went through the conflicts to find out about them. And the Lord is in that, because He does not intend the saints to be nurtured on detail of conflict. What the Lord would have the saints do is to look back to a period of substantial rest in the truth and consider what was developed in that time. And, beloved, if the Lord gives us a period of rest at the moment let us be sure that we are going to use it for advancement of just that kind even in our own day. There is much land still to be taken possession of, and the way to take possession of it, although it may involve conflict in itself - not

administrative conflict but conflict in relation to progress and taking up more ground which in a sense the enemy would desire to occupy - is to commit ourselves to taking up that, the land that remains to be taken possession of. Because I am sure the saints would agree that the Lord intends the brethren to be in the truth before He comes and when He comes. If He gives you tranquillity and rest from your enemies the thing is to consider what is for God and to go on into the truth.

Now David makes this suggestion straightaway; he says "See now, I dwell in a house of cedars, and the ark of God dwells under curtains", and Nathan the prophet says "Go, do all that is in thy heart; for Jehovah is with thee". One feels that, even though God in the night has to come in and show His thought about it, He was delighted that a man was considering in these circumstances how to make things better for Him. He comes in in the greatest grace and through Nathan He says, Go and tell David this. Now, beloved, this takes us on to the next thing, that if in a time of peace we begin to think first about God, what will God then do? In a certain way, if I may use the word, the next long paragraph of this chapter brings out to us in an extraordinary way the unselfishness of God, God says, if I may paraphrase the paragraph, I am not thinking about Myself at all. He says to David, I know you have thought about Me. God's heart would rejoice that a man thought about Him. But God says, Nathan, tell David this, I am not thinking about Myself at all, I am thinking about him. Think of that! As God gives you rest and you begin to think about Him, He says, I am not thinking about Myself, in the end I shall have it all. And in the end He will. And in 1 Chronicles 29 David comes to this. What God says to Nathan is, Tell David that what I am thinking about is David. And you might say that what God is saying at the present time is, I am thankful for the consideration the saints have for Me but what I want is to unfold what I have in view for them. Beloved, this chapter is remarkable, that God sends this message to David and He begins by saying, I took you from following the sheep, I took you from the sheepfolds and I have set you up and I have made you prince over My people, I have been

with you wherever you went and I have given you rest from your enemies, I have cut off your enemies round about. And then He says, David, what I have in view is not so much a place for Myself but a place for My people. It takes you right back to Egypt when God said "Let my people go" (Exod. 5: 1), when He took account of their being in the duress of Egypt and He said, I have heard and I have seen and I have come down to deliver them - My people. A day would come in their history when God has to say that they are not My people, but then another day will come when again God says, My people. Where they were called loammi they will be called Ammi once again and God will again call them My people. But in this chapter no question of breakdown is looked for, what is needed is fatherly discipline, that is all; just as the Father's discipline in Hebrews 12 will yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those exercised by it (see v 11). He says, If your son does iniquity then I will chastise him; but this is not punishment, this is discipline. As I said earlier about the government of God in the sense in which we say it is against us, we do well to think of that as discipline. It is a very hard thing if a Christian ever has language in his mind that God is against him; however well meaning the phrase is, to say that God is against you is hardly consistent with scripture, which rings out with this: "If God be for us, who against us?" Rom 8: 31. But God is not against persons. He may discipline them and His government may work in discipline but God is not against persons, and His government does not work against His saints. Look at His government when it is in your favour as His government, look at His government when it seems to be against you as His discipline. Here if things go wrong, God does not say, I will cut them off, He does not say that they will be scattered as He foretells even in Deuteronomy, He says if things go wrong there will be My discipline. But what I am looking forward to is the house that your son will build. He does not even say to David, You shall not build it because you have been a man of war; He does not find any fault like that. What God says is, I am thinking about My people; and, as David himself realises, I am thinking about them for a long time to come. Think of that, God looking ahead! And as you look in the third paragraph of this chapter

- what David says in response to God - you discover that he does not contemplate that his son will die, he says, You have blessed him for ever, You have blessed the house of Thy servant for ever. He does not contemplate that a day will come when his son will die, looking forward no doubt to his greater Son because what is established in David's greater Son will subsist for ever. Psalm 72 brings out the way in which the kingdom of David's son will subsist. It says "as long as sun and moon endure" (v 5), that is what is being looked forward to. And God's great consideration - I use the word carefully - is unselfishly not for Himself but in relation to His people.

I just suggest to the brethren that we have much to gain by thinking of God first. As we were saying in the reading, in David's fleeing from Absalom, as soon as he thought for God and worshipped Him there comes Hushai, and Hushai was the means of salvation in that issue because he defeated the counsel of Ahithophel which was actually militarily excellent advice. God brought in the defeat of that counsel as soon as there was worship.

And in this chapter, as soon as one begins to think for God, not now in conflict but in rest, God begins to elaborate His thoughts in relation to His people. He looks forward to a day when the sons of wickedness would afflict them no more. Think of that! Think of there never being any more trouble in the assembly, beloved! Is there any prospect of touching it even in this present time? But that is what God looks forward to, that the sons of wickedness would afflict it no more. Not that I am saying the sons of wickedness are in the assembly, but anything that is not according to God springs from some advantage the enemy has gained, but God is looking forward to the saints being at rest. In reading this chapter one has been reminded of Mr Darby who says in one of his earliest letters, when he was quite young, that he had not seen the saints of God very much at rest but, he says, I have been a man of contentions rather.

Think of that! a man making a judgment of himself and yet such a man writes hymns like, Rest of the saints above, Jerusalem of God! (No 74); he finds rest. A man of contentions, a man you might say of war - and what profitable war - and yet knowing what the rest of God

was to a degree that perhaps has rarely been touched since his day. And God develops to David His thoughts about His people. Think how precious God's people are to Him! Think how much His people mean to God! Think of this! that if in a moment of peace God leads your thoughts to what will be better for God, God will then say, Let Me lead your thoughts to what will be better for My people. Beloved, does it not affect you? Do you not feel that you have something to learn from God about His thoughts for His people? Even in the present day, if God brings in rest, then He is going to tell us, I have much better things in view for My people than anything they have had so far. I will appoint a place for My people, for Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and be disturbed no more. You might say these are touches of the world to come, touches of what will yet be when Christ reigns, but what I underline is this, that as soon as you go to God thinking for God, He will say to you, My prime thought is My people and I am going to have them in circumstances where they will be disturbed no more.

Perhaps we will not touch it, perhaps it will not be our experience. If the testimony continues for very much longer I suppose we have humbly to say that because of what we are in the flesh, disturbances arise again and again; but there was a time, a long time, when there was very little disturbance among the saints.

And do you know why? Because they were occupied with the thoughts of God about them. A time when people's minds have been engaged with what is in essence political takes a long time to grow out. Beloved, you do not need to grow out of it. Cut it off! There is no need to say, I do not think about this as much as I used to, and, I believe the brethren are getting free of so-and-so and so-and-so; learn the lesson and cut it off and discover what it is when there are no enemies and when you can think for God in peace, and you will discover that God has greater thoughts about His people than He has ever disclosed so far. He says "And I have given thee rest and Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house"; that is, God is looking on to another generation potentially available? Perhaps if we believed it we would see it coming to light. We begin

to despair and say that things are dying out, things are reduced and we are less than we were, and so on. That is not God's thought in 2 Samuel 7; He is looking on to another generation. Beloved, who has the faith that suits a day of peace? Many have the faith that suits a day of war, many can smell the battle from afar, and distribute news of it afar too for that matter, but the thoughts of God here are looking on to generation after generation, looking on *for ever*. David quickly sees the point. He comes back before God. Nathan has somehow disappeared; there is no need of a prophet now. David himself goes in and sits before Jehovah and says "Who am I... and what is my house". There is a man at rest before God, you might say bathed in the greatness of God's thoughts about him and God's thoughts about His people, and at rest in them; sitting there listening to God telling him about what God had in view, there quietly and at peace and then able responsively to speak to God about the greatness of what these blessings are. What David says is, Man never thought of this: "Is this the manner of man? " No, man was never like that, this must be God. Do you believe that? Do the brethren in New York believe that God has another generation with such dimensions of thoughts, such vastness. "Who am I", he says, "that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this hath been a small thing... but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come" - God looking on, even as we in our own day are now, into eternity. What God will have! - what He has now in this the Spirit's day, what He will have in the world to come when what He has secured in the assembly will be the means of mediating His glory to the earth, and then what He will have eternally in every family that the Father has named - all in spirituality yielding to God. God can look on a great time to come. God is at rest in it and David is at rest in it, and David is communing with God about the blessedness of God's thoughts. You do not wonder that he says, What can David say? What can you say and what can I say? It is a remarkable thing that it is not in Ephesians but in Corinthians that it says "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor 2: 16). As David says, What can David say to Thee? And then he says, You are not doing this for my sake, You are doing it for Your own, not now saying that God is thinking of Himself in what He is

doing, but God works for His own glory and gathers up men and women as the means of promoting and extending His own glory.

David says, You are doing it for Your own name's sake; that is, you might say, "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 4: 11) - that is what David is coming to, David perfectly at rest, and God at rest, and communion between a man and his God whom he well knew, and expanding in the greatness of these things. "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, to make thy servant know it". Then David begins to expand with fresh impressions about God. He talks about God and says "Thou art great" and "there is none like thee".

He will come back to very much like this language in 1 Chronicles 29 before he dies. He has completed his part of the work, what he has gathered up in affection and what he had gathered up in affliction; all that is completed and his heart goes out to God on perhaps the highest note reached in the Old Testament, when David speaks to God, when the house is about to be built and built by the man that was looked forward to in this chapter. David comes back to that kind of language. A lot of history comes in between, a lot of sorrow, a lot of weakness, a lot of departure, a lot of lack of discernment and lack of intelligence, but David at the end returns to the same kind of language as he uses here. But then he says to God, Who is like Thee and who is like Thy people? David has lost sight of himself. It suggests to me, beloved, that if God gives us a time of peace, of rest, a time of tranquillity in the midst of circumstances of difficulty and testing, there is a kind of well of water here by which you may sit. Now what will you find in it? You will find that if you are thinking about God, God is thinking about His people, and you then begin to say, Who is like God and who is like His people? You look round, even today, and see some of the saints of God. and you say, Who is like Thy people? That is what David said: "who is like thy people... the one nation in the earth that God went to redeem... ?" God picked out one nation in His sovereignty, just as He has taken up persons one by one in His sovereignty today. What responsibility sovereignty puts us under! The language that one uses who appreciates that is, Who is like Thy people? Even today - I

commend it to you - look round on a few of the saints of God and say to yourself, Who is like Thy people? One's part is among them, beloved, the only part one has is to be among them; not to depart, not to turn away, not to linger but to find one's place among them.

You may say that according to nature I know them all, I know one after another and they have this and that and the other in their history - how humble we have to be about our history! - but you look around and again you say, Who is like Thy people? These are people that God went to redeem, entering into the redemption of His people Himself even in Christianity, entering into the work of Christ, God's own feelings entering into that, and Christ giving Himself in order that redemption might be secured and God establishing redemption in the light of His blood. It says "One nation... that God went to redeem", and David appreciates them not according to their failure; David does not say, Yes, but these are the people who the other day were following Ishbosheth; and he does not say, Yes, but Israel was pretty tardy in acknowledging my kingship were they not? Oh no, David is past all that. He says, It is the one people that Jehovah went to redeem. It is an enlightened view of the brethren.

Beloved, let us take it, let us hold to it, let us live up to it, let us, each of us individually, give the brethren ground for expressing themselves to God about us like this, Who is like Thy people? God knows what His people are like and they are of the most immense value to Him: "The saints that are on the earth, and to the excellent... In them is all my delight", Ps 16: 3.

Then David goes on and praises God; he says "Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel" and "thou art that God, and thy words are true"; that is, David rests in God, it is a time of peace and he rests in God. Beloved, let us do it. And at the end where we read he says "Let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever;... and with thy blessing shall the house of thy servant be blessed for ever". That is what you get in tranquillity with God. I am not saying you do not get blessings like this in adversity and in difficulty, but this is what you get in tranquillity, a pool of tranquillity in the midst of conflict. In the next chapter it is conflict,

one thing after another, the Philistines, Moabites, Hadadezer, Syrians, Edomites, one tribe or nation after another. David goes back to that conflict; he has not become wholly abstract on account of God's thoughts; he is not saying, All the issues can now be passed by and we will leave all that. Oh no; I believe he approached the conflicts of chapter 8 in the light of what he had learned in restfulness with God in chapter 7; and in every incident in chapter 8 he triumphs. Was that not through the gain of getting the best out of tranquillity? He did not go and harangue God about the troubles; he does not in chapter 7 say to God, I have to go and see about these other tribes that are hindering my taking up my dominion. He went into God and was there restfully in the light of what God would give him in peace, and it fortified him for the necessary conflicts of the next chapter. And I think in the next chapter David in substance himself reigns from the river to the ends of the earth, holding it all in relation to his son who was yet to succeed him but in view of God blessing them for ever.

I just commend these thoughts to the brethren. As I said, the structure of scripture brings this chapter out as a kind of restful interlude in a time of trouble and then of war, and between the incidents you have a chapter of rest. Beloved, the Lord may give us a chapter of rest: how will you use it? I encourage the brethren to believe that there is much yet to be taken possession of. I am not talking about new truth or things of that kind, but there is much truth on which fresh light is needed, fresh ability to explore, fresh ability to penetrate, fresh ability to discover what God has already placed before us in His word. I could quote you remarks from Mr Darby, from Mr Raven, from Mr Stoney, from Mr Taylor, each of which on their own would suffice for at least one three-day meeting, a single remark from each brother. I just give you one - what did Mr Taylor mean when he said, Even the word God is relative. Do you think we could have a three-day meeting on that? I think that is an area in which there is much land yet to be taken possession of, and yet he said it. I tell you something else he said: when Jesus says, My God, there is a Man who is God saying, My God. Do you think that would

suffice for inquiry? Beloved, there is more land to be taken possession of than you know. We can probably point to the places in ministry that bear on conflicts with which we are familiar, conflicts which we still carry, conflicts which remain and in a sense occupy us, most of us know our way around the quotations for that; but think of these other things which touch depths unexplored and yet to be explored. Beloved, a time of peace is the time for that, and it makes you long that the brethren may be at peace in order that the truth of God may be the more among them. As the hymn that we sang says, a hymn addressed to the Spirit (I venture just personally to say it is one of my favourite hymns) 'Nor is this all'. Think of that! Do you ever stop and linger over those words in that hymn? - 'Nor is this all'. And the hymn writer says

'No eye has seen nor ear has ever heard,
Nor heart of man is great enough to hold
Those wondrous things in love by God prepared'.

Beloved, they are there and a time of tranquillity is a time to inquire into them. And if the Lord gives you peace, be a son of peace and keep the peace and protect the peace in order that the saints at rest may be able to cultivate the inheritance and thus yield to God in worship. As we were saying, think of how many baskets full would be brought out of that time of rest. Beloved, it would be worth it.

May we learn from what seems to me an interlude of tranquillity, that God may be enriched by it. For His Name's sake.

BROOKLYN NY

9 December 1978

THE CHILDREN'S THIRST

The last of the many pleadings in the Bible is for the thirsty one to come and "take of the water of life freely". A well-known feeling in daily life is thus used by the Spirit of God to show the sense of need felt within our souls and spirits when He is working in us. At the same time He directs us to the source of life in Jesus in glory that will meet our need. In the old creation there are some desert parts of the world where rain falls very, very seldom; there are also in those places seeds and plants which are just waiting for this so as to bring forth their fruits. So in new creation's work there must be many thirsty souls ready for the life-giving heavenly showers.

There is a very touching verse of a familiar hymn for children and it reads as follows: -

'We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.'

One of the pains that Jesus endured on the cross was thirst; in fact, this was the suffering most marked after the bearing of sins and just before He yielded up His spirit. At that time He drank the vinegar, or sour wine given to Him by the soldiers, fulfilling the scripture "in my thirst they gave me vinegar". The vinegar offered to Him earlier He would not drink because it was mingled with a drug intended to dull the feelings at so cruel a death. The blessed Saviour would not accept such a relief even though well-intentioned. The cup of suffering was full for Him, and the cup of blessing is full for us.

Scripture speaks of the resources of spiritual life by many beautiful figures such as water-brooks, springs, deep waters and rivers. Just as the great river Amazon sends its fresh streams hundreds of miles out into the salt ocean, so the living waters are to be enjoyed in a thirsting world. The prophet Isaiah wrote of drawing water with joy from the wells of salvation - without saying how many

there are! No doubt there is one for every need because Jesus died and lives again. Can you sing 'I believe' it was for me He 'hung and suffered there'?

J.C.Evershed