

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

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The germ of what I have to say was gleaned from the opening hymn this morning:

'Death had on Thee no claim,
Thou sinless One!
He who had death's dread power
Met Thee in that dark hour:
Vanquished by Thee his power,
By Thee alone' (No 152)

and so the subject for tonight, beloved hearers, is deliverance. Of course we cannot speak about deliverance and not speak about the Deliverer. The order would be the Deliverer first and then the deliverance. I feel I am following an excellent example because the Lord Jesus stood up in the synagogue of Nazareth and, as recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke, said, 'I have come to preach deliverance to the captives'. So the example is *par excellence*.

What this poor world needs at all times, but particularly today, is deliverance, and it will never find it until He comes whose right it is.

The scripture says, "The deliverer shall come out of Zion" (Rom 11: 26), and this poor scene in chains of darkness, death, and distance from God, will then know the power of the deliverance. He will come out from Zion. He comes out on the principle of sovereign mercy in that day. The whole earth will respond to the touch of peace that He will give to this scene. That is really the only solution to the world's problems. Men may have all sorts of plans, but the key to the situation lies in the Deliverer coming out of Zion. In Thessalonians it reads: "Jesus, our deliverer from the coming wrath", 1 Thess 1: 10.

Beloved hearers it is comforting to know that, in the wrath that is going to come upon this poor world, those who know the Lord have a

Deliverer from it. They will not endure the wrath that is coming upon this world.

So I thought of this passage, because David is a beautiful type of Christ as the Deliverer. We have the Deliverer and we have the deliverance, and in Jonathan we have a person who was delivered.

So there is the Person and then the results of His work. The men of Israel, when - they saw Goliath, fled from him and were greatly afraid. Now, it is not the first time that the Philistines had been faced by the armies of Israel. It tells you previously in the book of Samuel that Jonathan and his armour-bearer went up and they had a great victory over the Philistines. That alludes directly to the Old Testament worthies who had to deal with the enemies in the land, but when this imposing figure comes on to view, there is only one Man able to meet it, only one. Do you know who he speaks of, beloved hearers? Jesus. "When they saw the man" (Goliath) they "fled from him and were greatly afraid. And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that comes up? " Have you seen him? Oh yes, we have seen him. You only need to look around on this poor scene to see what the man, the Philistine of Gath, represents, the man with the six fingers and the six toes and all the power to keep men in bondage. Have you seen him? He is around us, and on every hand is the power of that man. So they were afraid. Eliab said to David, his brother, Have you come out to see the battle? There was no battle. Man is in retreat today before the forces of evil. That is a fact. Men think they are going to overcome evil by government, by social reconstruction, by the general down-grading of things or upgrading, whatever way you see it, but man was in defeat until Jesus - typified here by David - came on the scene.

We read, "And Saul clothed David with his dress, and put a helmet of bronze upon his head, and clothed him with a corselet.

And David girded his sword upon his dress, and endeavoured to go; for he had not yet tried it. And David said to Saul, I cannot go in these; for I have never tried them". Now, you can read a lot into that, but one thing stands out in the passage in type as clear as could be, that when the Lord Jesus undertook the great work of salvation He

did it without help from man. He took the whole work upon Himself in its totality, and nothing in man's organisation was used. You will remember that in John 6 they wanted to make the Lord a king, and He went away into a desert place. That was like David saying, I am not going to wear Saul's armour. Jesus was the rightful King and they wanted to make Him a king, but, no, He refused, He went away into a desert place. Nothing of this world is going to add to the glory of God in delivering man from the thralldom under which he lies.

So David "took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag that he had, into the pocket; and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine". It was a lowly Jesus who came into this world. These five smooth stones remind us of that perfect, dependent Man - no conqueror, no pomp, no glory, nothing that man could invest Him with, just five smooth stones. He was a Man who spent His nights in prayer and supplication to God - complete, perfect dependence. What a contrast to the leaders of the present time who surround themselves with modern armaments, things that they feel they are not able to use on account of the awfulness of what will come to pass if they are released. But a lowly Saviour came here, born in a manger, son of a carpenter. He went to the lowest place in the land to live, down to Nazareth, and to Capernaum. That was Jesus! Beloved hearers, if He had come any other way, it would not have been God's way. God has one way, and Jesus took that way and He went down to Calvary in perfect dependence upon God. And so it says in verse 49, "And David put his hand into the bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it". I have often wondered at that. He did not put his hand into the bag and search round the bottom of the bag and see if he could get the biggest stone: no. He might have said, This is a formidable task that I have today, and perhaps I should get the biggest stone from my bag. He just put his hand in and took out a stone. Do you see the point, beloved hearers? It was the expression of complete dependence on God. The Lord Jesus made no choice of His own, every step He took was in perfect dependence on God. David put

his hand into the bag and took out a stone, and he slang it right to the head of that Philistine, right in the exact spot.

Now, I want to make it clear that Goliath is not a type of the devil. That is a matter of teaching. I want the younger brethren to grasp that. Goliath is a type of the power of death as wielded by the devil, holding all men in bondage. Death is the devil's greatest weapon. The fear of death is what holds men in bondage. David with his stone and his sling found the vital spot in the power that held men in bondage. And what happened? When Jesus died He broke the power of death for ever. It says, "and the stone sank into his forehead; and he fell on his face to the earth. So David overcame the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and smote the Philistine and killed him". He took from death its sting away. Do you know that death has a sting? What is the difference between a believer and an unbeliever? When a believer dies he does not experience the sting of death. When an unbeliever dies, the sting of death is present.

The sting of death has been taken out when the Lord Jesus went into death and broke its power. Wonderful triumph!

'Out of Thy death has sprung
A wondrous living throng'.

He has taken the sting of death away for the believer. And it says, "And there was no sword in the hand of David. And David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him completely". Dear hearers, get your eye fixed on that open tomb at the end of the gospels. After three days, what do you see? You see an empty tomb - he "killed him completely". It was manifest that Jesus had broken the power of death for ever. A glorious Saviour came out of that tomb. How great the victory! What a hope for man, desolate, fearing death, fearing judgment; not only Christ on the cross, blessed as that is, but an empty tomb - "killed him completely". We have little conception of the magnitude of what Jesus did when He broke the power of death for ever. The hold that Satan had over man is for ever broken. He is a risen Saviour. Oh, get that into your souls, get it into your heart.

Then it says, "And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent". Now out of the grave, up there - that is where He is, up there. He took the head up to Jerusalem. What is Jerusalem? "Jerusalem above", it says, "which is our mother" Gal 4: 26. Jesus is in that great centre of divine administration. And what is He administering? First of all He is administering the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jerusalem speaks of the great centre of divine administration consequent on the victory that Christ has accomplished. The forgiveness of sins, justification, eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit: these things come from the exalted Christ. Is that not wonderful? What a deliverance! The world cannot give a believer anything. It cannot give you anything if you are a believer. A believer gets everything from Christ, from that glorious Man up there. He looks up and sees Him there, victorious, triumphant, and comes into the gain of His administration. How feeble the administration of man is in the light of what Jesus is dispensing today in the gospel - wonderful blessing!

So Saul said to Abner, "Abner, whose son is this young man? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth O king, I cannot tell". What an abject admission! He had been in the army, he had seen that young man go forward with a sling and a stone, he saw that stone go with unerring accuracy into the temple of that giant, and he did not so much as turn to his neighbour and say, Who is that young man? That is the heart of man, the heart of man today, indifferent, could not care less. People will pass by the gospel preaching, will pass by the notice board, and lift their head in scorn - We do not know Him: that is Abner, and yet the greatest blessing that God has in His heart for man is in Jesus. Is there anybody here who would answer like Abner? Would anybody here say, I cannot tell? I trust not. The greatest joy to a believer is to tell His worth His glory, and His triumphs. Abner should have been the first to congratulate him but oh, jealousy, that is what it was. The root of the conflict in this world today, the hatred, if I speak dispensationally, against Israel, is jealousy. That is the root of the bitter enmity. Even though Israel had gone back to Palestine in unbelief, the enmity against them is

the jealousy that they have the knowledge of Jehovah the true God. They rejected Jesus, rejected the Messiah, but they are still God's chosen people.

So Saul wanted David to adorn his system. Can I be topical? What is going on in the world at this time of the year is like Saul wanting to adorn his system with David. It puts a veneer on things.

Saul thought how wonderful his kingdom would be if he had David there. He would be able to say, See this wonderful young man who adorns my system. That is what the world is. It is a mockery - I feel saying that. I passed through the city the other night with all the bright lights, and there was an illuminated cross amongst them.

What a travesty of things, the cross upon which Jesus died, the cross upon which He shed His blood; men use it to adorn their festivities. The cross at Calvary was not illuminated; there was darkness (see Matt 27: 45) - 'The darkness sought His woes to hide' (Hymn 13).

But there is a fine young man here. "And it came to pass, when he had ended speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul". Is that your experience? Have you been so attracted, drawn and held by the love of Jesus, by His grace, that your soul is knit with Him? In other words, He is the dearest object of your heart. That was Jonathan. A sceptic may say, Well, you know what happened afterwards. Is any sceptic here prepared to point a finger as to what happened afterwards? I will tell you this, dear hearers, the day you shone for Christ, the day your soul was knit with the true David, that day is treasured in heaven and will never be forgotten. It was one of heaven's delights when these two, David and Jonathan, kissed each other, their souls knit. What an experience! Have you known it, the throb of affection for Christ commanding your whole being, eclipsing everything else? That was what marked this scene. And it says, "And Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his dress, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle". Again the sceptic says, What

about his shoes? To me these are details. The heart of Christ delights when you divest yourself of all that adorns you humanly.

Divest yourself of it and use everything you have for the glorification of Jesus. Make a covenant with Him. You say, That refers to the breaking of bread. Probably, but let us be true to our vows, let us be true to what we said: I love the Lord Jesus, I love the Lord's people, I would like to be shining here for Christ. Remember your committals. May the covenant be as fresh in your heart tonight as it ever was.

Stand fast for the true David till He comes again; the Deliverer will come out of Zion. No greater blessing can be known by persons in this world than these precious things that He administers from His place on high in the gospel. May it be so for all of us. For His Name's sake. Amen.

EDINBURGH

23 December 1990

EACH ONE PART

David Hutson

1 Corinthians 12: 7-12, 18, 22, 27; 14: 26 Ephesians 4: 15, 16

I wonder for myself, beloved, whether I fully realise the implication of being a member of the body of Christ. Every member of our natural bodies has a function, and, may I say, a contributing function, to the well-being of the body as a whole. So one is concerned as to what one may contribute in view of the working of the body of Christ, concerned that we might all be exercised as to what we are contributing in relation to the working of the body as it finds its expression in our localities, as it may do as we seek to walk, as we often say, in the light of the assembly, so that we may experience something of what it says here: "so also is the Christ".

I read these verses because they seem to indicate that there is no member which has not something particular given to it by the Spirit. It says, "But to each", not to some, but "to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit". Then it goes on to enlarge on it: "For to one, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge" and so on. "But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit".

So I would have to find out what it is that has been given to me for profit, for the profit of the body. I remember beloved Mr Percy Hardwick saying on at least one occasion that we are not to have passengers in the assembly. Every member is a contributing member, even the receptive members. These that are referred to as the eye and the ear are receptive members, but think how, even in a physical sense, the function of the whole body is impaired if these members are not in function. They are, in that sense, a contributing factor to the well-being of the body as a whole.

So our exercise would be, beloved, as to what we are contributing as we come together at a time like this, not excluding the sisters; their part is not vocal, but they are not here just, if I may say respectfully, for what they may receive; there is exercise in their

coming. Those of us who have audible part in the assembly are thankful for what we feel in the way of support from the body of the saints including the sisters; so that in that sense they have something to contribute. They are not here merely receptively but contributively to the atmosphere in which the Holy Spirit may be free and operating among us, in which we may prove the experience of drawing upon the headship of Christ. Sisters are here contributively: we are all in it in that way. That would be the concern - as to what we may contribute.

So it says, "For even as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ". Having said that, the Spirit divides "to each in particular" - not to some, but to each. These words "each" and "particular" strike me in this section. It used to be asked in times gone by, Have we found our place in the body? Perhaps we need to be reminded of that. I am being searched myself as to whether I can really say that I have found my place in the body as to its expression in the local company. It says, "For also the body is not one member but many" (v 14), and then, "But now God has set the members, each one of them" - again that word 'each' comes in - "in the body, according as it has pleased him". So it is not in any way arbitrary, but God has ordered it; He has operated by the Spirit; God has set the members. It says, "But to each the manifestation of the Spirit is given"; it speaks of the Spirit dividing; but then it says "God". We remember who the Holy Spirit is and God is operating by the Spirit, setting the members, each one of them, in the body, according as it has pleased Him. Then it says, "Now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular", so that each one is to find his or her place and just what their function is in the body.

Of course, at Corinth there was Jew and Gentile and church of God, and all believers were together there and it could be said in a way in which it cannot be said now, that "ye are Christ's body". The apostle could not come into this company as gathered tonight and say, "ye are Christ's body", but nevertheless, what it says, that we

are members in particular, remains, so that there is to be functioning as we come together.

Hence I read in chapter 14: "What is it then, brethren? whenever ye come together, each of you" - that word 'each' comes in again - "each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done to edification". It is a question of what we have when we come together. It is not that we necessarily contribute what we have, but we have something, and it is available in the way of substance. We may have some impression but may not give expression to it; we just have to wait. A brother whom we value said that he had a word once and held it for a year before bringing it forward, but he had it all that time: each one of you has something. It says also as to "a revelation to another sitting there" (v 30). Something may come as a result of the hymn or the prayer, something coming in at the time for which we are glad to make room, but the great point is that each one of us has something as we come together. So we come together as contributors. We come together to hear what the Lord would say to us and that is right, but what are we contributing to the atmosphere, to the working, to the functioning of things, in view of that word coming, in view of the Lord being free among us and the Holy Spirit in liberty so that the word may come?

But, as we are often reminded, in Ephesians it is a different matter, speaking of the body in relation to the Head. In Corinthians we have certain things like the eye and the ear which are part of the head, so that it is a different thing; it is just the natural and physical body being brought forward to illustrate the working of things in the locality. But now in Ephesians it says, "but, holding the truth in love, we may grow up to him in all things, who is the head, the Christ".

What a wonderful thing that is - all that would come in as we make way for Him and as we are all in our places and functioning and available. It would all be coming in from Himself, as it says, "from whom the whole body, fitted together, and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part" - again "each" comes in. The body of Christ on earth at the present

time comprises every believer indwelt by the Spirit; we cannot see it, but Christ can see it, and the Holy Spirit can see it. The chapter opens with "using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace" (v 3), so we would always have before us every member of the body. Our hearts have been enlarged of late to see the expansiveness of what the Lord has here in His body, in every member; so few are available to us, we have to own that, but thank God for those that are available in whom we can work out these things together, "holding the truth in love". And then, "the working in its measure of each one part, works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love". Well, that is wonderful. I believe it is working at the present time: "works for itself the increase of the body to its self-building up in love". The body in this sense comprises every believer. It is a wonderful thing that, as we are each functioning in our own part as members of the body of Christ in this setting, there is that which is working for the increase of the body. Although all the members are not available, divisions having come in, there is no breakdown in the body. The house is in ruins, but the body is held together by the Spirit, in the unity of the Spirit, but it says it "works for itself the increase of the body". I believe, as every member is functioning, there is, can I say carefully, more of the body available in expression for the heart of Christ. It makes more room for the Spirit. It is "the increase of the body to its self-building up in love".

I just have the impression, dear brethren, that we need to realise, as forming part of the assembly, that anything which is added to us on an occasion like this is for the increase of the body, that is the body as a whole, and anything which is added in the way of substance is all adding to that glorious vessel which is soon going to come down out of the heaven from God having the glory of God.

It is not simply what I may acquire myself. There is that which is formative in each one of us, but what is being formed in each one of us is in view of what is going to be brought into display in that glorious vessel. So we can look beyond the breakdown and the ruin and see that there is here actually - may I say simply in this very

room if anything is added tonight in substance to any one of us? - there is something which is being added which is going to come out in display in that glorious vessel so soon. I believe we need to keep these large thoughts before us, and it works out and stands related to "the working in its measure of each one part". We all have a measure. There is the working of things in our localities and what we can bring and what we contribute, but then there is the wider sphere in which it is working, and working in view of there being more for the heart of Christ in relation to His body at the present time and more added in relation to that glorious vessel which is soon going to come out of the heaven from God having His glory.

May we keep these large thoughts before us and may they help us to find our part contributively in what is here in the light of these things at the present time. In the Name of the Lord Jesus.

LONDON

19 February 1991

WHAT IS IN THE PLACE

Ernest Palmer

John 6: 5-13

As our brother was speaking this section of John 6 came into my mind, and what impresses me is as to what is available in the place, the very place, where the question is raised. The Lord raises the question that He does when He saw that crowd coming to Him. He raises the question as to place. He says, "Whence?" where? in addition to raising the question as to the loaves that those who were coming might eat. It seems to me that there is what is adequate in the place where the Lord raises questions to meet the situation, whatever it may be, for the satisfaction of all who are there.

The Lord does not chide anybody. He knew what He was going to do, but He tested out Philip. He selected one - he might be a sample man; it might be any of us; and He raises a question with an individual. Our brother has been speaking about individuals and what has been committed to them and what is available, and the Lord tests out Philip. It is evident that Philip did not carefully listen to what the Lord said because he does not answer in regard to place.

He does not say, for example, There is a village just over there; we could go there. He does not say that, but he starts speaking about the cost, how much it was going to cost.

But there was an individual there, a disciple, Andrew, and he did listen. It says, "One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, says to him, There is a little boy here". Here: that is in the locality, beloved. That is in the place where the question is raised.

"There is a little boy here": small, perhaps he might have been regarded as rather insignificant, but the great thing is that he *had* something, and the something that he had is taken up by the Lord Himself and under His hand is sufficient to meet the situation that existed; not only to meet the need but to provide satisfaction for those who came under the touch of what the Lord could do with a little boy having five loaves and two small fishes - complete

satisfaction! Moreover there was an overabundance gathered up that could have been available for others, but, in any case, the Lord says, "that nothing may be lost". Where is it worked out? In the locality.

Now, beloved, what potential there is in our own locality! We are gathered here in relation to the locality to which we belong, having a privileged part in the testimony in London. What potential there is! And I say to myself, Can we in simplicity put the little that we may have, under the hand of the Lord, that it may become a satisfying portion for those who are present in the place where the question is raised?

Well, may the Lord help us in this for His Name's sake.

LONDON

19 February 1991

SHADOWS

Eric Burr

Song of Songs 2: 16, 17 (first clause) 4: 6

We sang, as our beloved brother reminded us, a hymn that refers to waiting, and in both these scriptures there are persons waiting. They are waiting until the day dawn, and I suppose it would be right to say that that is what we are waiting for. At the preaching here on Lord's day our brother who served spoke from Isaiah 21: "Watchman, what of the night? ... The morning cometh"; and, beloved, the day will dawn - "until the day dawn" (vv 11,12).

In both these scriptures persons are occupied until the day dawns, but at the same time there are shadows. Not all the shadows in Scripture are, as you might say, unfavourable. We frequently think of shadows as unfavourable, but they are not all unfavourable. There is "the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land",

Isa 32: 2. What could be more favourable than that? And when Peter was here his shadow benefited people (see Acts 5: 15). Not all the shadows are unfavourable, and I say to the brethren that not all the shadows that come into your life are unfavourable.

There are other instances where persons are in shadows and favourable things happen to them. We had, referring again to that preaching: "they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them light hath shone", Isa 9: 2. And that blessed verse in the twenty-third Psalm: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" (v 4). As I say, not all the shadows that come upon us are unfavourable; even when we are in the shadows, favourable things can happen.

But I was reflecting, as one thinks and hears of things current among the saints at the present time, that there are many shadows, many, many shadows. We have the shadow of death. A beloved brother, long known among us, was taken to be with Christ, and it leaves a shadow for the moment. For him it is much better. For him the day has dawned, the shadows have gone; but there is a shadow left. And there are instances of very grave sickness amongst us, and they cast a shadow, do they not? Ask yourself: do they cast a shadow over you or do you not mind? Do you think, Well, these things happen to somebody else, or these things happen to everybody? But when they happen in a company which walks in the light of the body of Christ, the shadow falls on everybody. And we hear of others suddenly taken sick, taken to hospital, taken into circumstances from which they may not see the light again: the shadow falls. And shadows of other kinds fall: the shadow of sickness comes upon us and it hinders us. We cannot do as we once would. We feel like Peter: "when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and bring thee where thou dost not desire" John 21: 18. There is a shadow. You think of younger brethren too: everything seems all right, making arrangements for their lives and that kind of thing, and the shadow of unemployment falls. That shadow can fall in five minutes. The

hardness of the commercial and industrial world at the moment is savage, and the shadow is there.

I believe, beloved, that we should take account of these things, of the shadows that come upon us and come upon our brethren, because one thing that is intended is that they should sober us. You would always expect a Christian to be happy, but you can be happy and sober. You would not expect a Christian to be frivolous, and shadows are intended to cut at the root of frivolity among us.

Because there are frivolous things that happen, and we know it. They are spoken about quietly and they are not ministered about, but there are frivolous things that happen. The shadow falls, and we do well to take account of this because these things are arranged of the Lord. But the shadow may fall here and there. If it does not fall directly across you it will fall across somebody that you know, and you are in the body, the body of Christ, and you are intended to feel it. You would not need to think far round the brethren with whom you walk in this city to be able to count shadows, would you? There is a scripture that I have been familiar with: "The heart knoweth its own bitterness" - the heart knows where the shadow falls - "a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy", Prov 14: 10. But the shadow is there. One of the poets says, 'Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught', and it is true.

In these two scriptures persons are occupied in the time of the shadows. The day has not come. It is "until the day dawn". What are you going to do? You are going to have the shadows all the time. It says, "Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away". The shadows will remain and we shall not complete our course under the Lord's hand without shadows, and unexpected shadows, falling upon us.

I refer to the second scripture first because in the first scripture the one we speak of as the spouse is speaking. In the second scripture the Beloved is speaking, and He says, "Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, And to the hill of frankincense". The brethren have had opportunity of reading the address given by our brother as to suffering love (see

'A Word In Its Season', No.215). "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh": that is where the Lord is, from one point of view, at the present time. There is nothing that happens among His people which He Himself does not feel. He may allow it, but He Himself feels it; in that place where He can still carry the feelings of suffering love in relation to His body and His saints, He is there. Until the shadows go, He is there: "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh". If you feel the shadows coming over your life, if you feel the shadows coming near to you, remember this: the Lord Himself is in the mountain of myrrh. He is there feeling every suffering that you feel, that any of His people feel. He is there in the mountain of myrrh.

And the hill of frankincense: that is - to say that, until the shadows flee away, He is in the place where there is this liberated fragrance for God. He is there, and until the shadows flee away He will be there. He does not give up this position. In fact, if you read on in this chapter, He invites His spouse to come with Him into such circumstances as those, but until the shadows flee away He is in the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.

In chapter 2 where I read - "My beloved is mine, and I am his; He feedeth his flock among the lilies" - it is the spouse speaking. It is not the Bridegroom speaking; it is the spouse: "Until the day dawn and the shadows flee away". "My beloved is mine, and I am his" - what blessedness that is! The hymn says,

'Oh, I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved's mine;
He brings me 'neath love's banner,
Into His house of wine'.

But, beloved, "My beloved is mine and I am his" - that is union with Christ - "He feedeth his flock among the lilies": right through the time of shadows He is feeding His flock there. He is feeding them in what almost speaks of a place of ideal purity. "He feedeth his flock among the lilies, Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away".

Have you realised that? Do you realise that in the circumstances the Lord has allowed for you where a shadow that you would never have foreseen falls across you? It is not that the sun is behind you and

casting your shadow. It is a shadow that the Lord allows in His dealings with you, His care for you, His affection for you, and He feeds you in that time: He feeds you in this area of complete and holy purity. What a place to be in! A day will come when the shadows have actually all gone. They have not gone yet. Very few of us have been through circumstances that were shadowed and then felt that the shadows had all gone, because the Lord, as it were, leaves the trace of the experience with us, and we carry it on. But think of what one of these old poets said:

'In that holiness unsullied,
I shall walk with Him'.

That is, He feeds His flock among the lilies, and, in those circumstances, 'I shall walk with Him'. Beloved, "Until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away" He will be there. It is no question whether I have a pure heart or whether I am seeking to purify my heart. The fact is the Lord will take me into that area of unsullied purity where, above all, I can learn undistractedly what the shadows are meant for.

Well, beloved, there are many shadows amongst us at the present time. You never know when you go home that the telephone might ring and you will hear of something else. Any day someone will ring up, Sorry it is so late in the day to ring you but have you heard ... ? and there is another shadow. But the Lord is there still in that place of suffering love and free fragrance for God, and He is leading us in an area of unsullied purity where we may learn with Him and walk with Him. Well, may we be helped, for His Name's sake.

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CHILDREN NAMED

At a household baptism the full names of the babe are mentioned in the same sentence as the great Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The true desire in this is to seek a full blessing for the child baptised and, as time may go on, to enrich God's responsive service. Many names given to children have a meaning which, in some cases, may come from a language other than their native one. When king Solomon (peaceable) was born God sent a special messenger with a new name, Jedidiah, meaning that the child was "Beloved of Jehovah". This shows how God has longings even for the youngest.

The names of the first children to be born are well-known and it is possible that they were twins. Cain means much the same as 'gain', whereas Abel means merely 'a breath'. They must each have had the same parental care and the same teaching about the Creator. However the first, with the more high-sounding name, thought that God would accept him because of what he himself could do. But Abel by faith - which comes by hearing God's word - brought from the flock a more excellent sacrifice. Therefore he was accepted, as we say of believers now, in the worth of Christ and His work of atonement.

In the New Testament the only names recorded at birth are those of the Lord Jesus and John who was to be His forerunner. The latter name tells us something *about* God, being a short form of the word meaning 'God is gracious'. But Jesus *was* God Himself come into human infancy and at once named as the Saviour. How the heavenly host must have rejoiced when they said "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men"! Do you sing His praise or must the stones themselves cry out?

J.C.Evershed