

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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Contents

THE FATHER'S LOVE

"A VEIN FOR THE SILVER"

PRAYER

PRAISE

THE FATHER'S LOVE

John 17: 6-14, 22-26; Ephesians 1: 6

R.T. I felt from this morning that there might be help for us in having some fresh sense of the Father's love. I do not know that I can say a great deal about it, but I am sure we all have had some experience of it. The Lord says "thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me".

We cannot fathom those words, but they would be meant to leave some impression upon us that leads us to worship. The Father's love brings about a certain restfulness with us, and a sense of peace that we are brought to be at home in the presence of a love we cannot fathom. But we know it. The way the Lord brings the disciples into the sense of it in view of His leaving them is very touching. He says, "whom thou gavest me out of the world". I do not think the world knows anything about the Father's love. Indeed, John in his epistle says that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us (see 1 John 2: 15). There is an area that Christ would bring us into where we know the Father's love:

'Yet deeper, if a calmer, joy
The Father's love shall raise'. (Hymn 178)

I think that, by the experience of the Supper and knowing the love of Christ, the Lord leads us into a sense of the Father's love: "for the Father himself has affection for you", John 16: 27. These things affect our spirits and develop in us a sense of maturity that would be a stay and strength to us in the midst of the present surroundings.

The Lord lived in the Father's love; we can see that from this gospel. He was in circumstances such as we are in and felt things in a way that we could not feel them, but it is obvious that He lived in the sense of the Father's love. That is what John was impressed about as He saw the Lord and knew Him, that He lived in the sense of an undisturbed relationship that gave power and effect to all that He did. We feel measured in what we can say about these things, but I think these verses may help us. He says, "I have manifested thy name".

The Lord's sojourn among them and His contacts with them left them with an impression of the Father and of the Father's love.

E.C.B. Is there a connection between the Father's love, as you are now speaking of it, and purpose? In chapter 16, to which you alluded, there is a reason given: "because". Do you have in mind that there is an experience of the Father's love which is because of what the Father is?

R.T. I think so. I might have read Ephesians. We get it set out there, that He chose us in Him before the world's foundation. It brings a depth to the Father's love that, before ever sin came in, before ever we were born, the Father purposed to have us; and His love has moved to effect that purpose, effected it through Christ in His pathway here. So the Lord says, "I have manifested thy name to the men", as if what He was showing them and what He was doing among them was all flowing from a love of purpose, as you said.

E.C.B. What you refer to in Ephesians, "before the world's foundation", must be before "because ye have had affection for me" in chapter 16 because that implies the incarnation. I was thinking what depth there is in the fact that the Father loved us and then He gave us to Christ. Is that right?

R.T. That is the way He has drawn us into His own love, that He portrayed it, you may say, in the Person of the Son, so attractively, in manhood here: "Behold the Lamb of God". It drew us to Him, and the great end was that we might come to know the Father's love. It reminds me of what Mr Raven said (something that I have always enjoyed): I was a saint in purpose before ever I was a sinner in practice. I think that brings us to the Father's love. It is not a love that loves me because I am good or anything at all, but I was a saint in purpose before ever I was a sinner in practice. What maturity that brings into the spirit, and restfulness in the midst of a world where things are all against us.

E.C.B. That contributes to our understanding of "my peace" and "my joy" that Jesus spoke of in a world, as you said, such as the one in which we are; but He had peace and joy there.

R.T. The Father's love in the soul, known and lived in, helps us in the very conditions we are in to be to the glory of His grace, "wherein he has taken us into favour in the Beloved".

J.C.E. In our practical relations with the Father, is it a challenge as to whether we love Him better when He refuses our petitions?

R.T. That is a challenge to us, but I think the better we know the Father, we know that, whatever His attitude towards us, it is for our good: "God conducts himself towards you as towards sons", Heb 12: 7. He never changes. He never changes His disposition towards us or His thoughts about us, but I think He has given us to Christ to lead us into an area where there is, we may say, undisturbed affection.

D.J.H. It is wonderful that the Lord Jesus says "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world". That would not be in this relationship, would it? What the relationship was we cannot say, but that would be the same love.

R.T. It was the Person, was it not? We cannot say much. We cannot carry the relationship back, but this is the way it has come to us. "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world". We do not want to make this difficult or something that we cannot fathom. It is for the very simplest and youngest of us that the Father gave us to Christ out of the world. He operated when there was no spark in you or me. He operated to take us out of the world, to bring us into an area where His affections are to be known and responded to.

E.C.B. Mr Stoney says more than once in regard to Luke 15, speaking of the Father, that love travelled faster than necessity. That is the aspect of things you are touching on, is it not? You were loved in purpose before you were a sinner in responsibility or in practice.

R.T. Why did it travel that distance? What was the end in view?

EC.B. The end was to have the son back in the father's house.

R.T. The end in view was to put the best robe on him. The father would not have been satisfied until that robe was put upon him. I

think that is what the Father's love gives us an impression of, the robe and the ring and the shoes.

E.C.B. That is the first thing the father says: "Bring out the best robe".

R.T. I think that is what the Lord is leading the disciples into here, to bring us to know something of the Father's affections and how He would have us before Him in love to be responsive to the glory of His grace. You can well understand the Son being to the glory of His grace.

D.J.H. It is precious what you say. I hardly like to use the word as to the 'simplicity' of it, but John says "I write to you, little children, because ye have known the Father", 1 John 2: 13. It is the youngest in the divine family that know the Father. That would be to know His love.

R.T. I think so. That is a good word to bring into this - the family. That is what the Father is bringing us into, and we are all in the family on an equal footing. The Father's love brings us to have on the best robe. However young we may be, as we have come under the influence of the work and grace of Christ, we each have the best robe and a ring and shoes. We are each there to the glory of His grace.

H.A.H. So the father does not answer the son's protestations, but, as you say, "Bring out the best robe"; and with that on, all his doubts and anxieties would disappear at once.

R.T. In saying "I have manifested thy name", the Lord does not make Himself the objective, if you understand what I mean. It is not only that they are brought to love Christ, but the Lord leads us in to come to know the Father and the Father's love; we are brought into the family and into the house, to be at rest, to be to the glory of His grace.

B.H.C. Israel said, in regard to Ephraim and Manasseh, "Bring them ... to me", Gen 48: 9. Love would delight in nearness, would it not?

R.T. I once had an impression on that verse from Mr Parker. Israel says, "Bring them ... to me, that I may bless them", but the first thing he did was to kiss them: the blessing came afterwards. First of all he kissed them and that is what the father does in Luke 15. He brings them in. The blessing is something else, but the first thing was the kiss, and that is what the Lord would lead us into, to come to know the Father's kiss, and to know His embrace, and to know that we are brought into what is immeasurable and that the Father gives us to be at home in it.

E.C.B. That we should be at home in it is the impression conveyed by that "we should be to the praise of his glory". It does not say we say anything; it does not say anything else about us, save that the fact that we are there is to the praise of the glory of the Father's grace.

R.T. It is wonderful just to be there. It is not service exactly. It is just to be basking in the wealth of His love, but, of course, it must evoke sonship's response.

E.C.B. "Holy and blameless before him in love" is sonship, is it not? But it is not that we should be; it is the Father's satisfaction in having for Himself what He gave to Christ.

R.T. We have been taught that reconciliation is more for God than for us. The son might have done without the robe, but the father could not. The father had to have the robe upon the son, to have him in his house for his pleasure. Is what we are saying intelligible?

G.A.O. I would like you to open up that last statement that reconciliation is more for the Father than for us.

R.T. I am just saying what we have in the ministry. Reconciliation is to make God at home with us, you may say. The new covenant is to make us at home with God. We need to think over that. In reconciliation God has not only removed the distance but looks upon us and does not raise any questions because we are clothed in the worth and preciousness of Christ. That is for His eye. The new covenant comes in to set me at peace that the blood of Christ has cleared the ground that I can be at home with God. Is that true?

E.C.B. It is very important to understand - if I may put it like that - that reconciliation is not God come to us but us brought to God; and really it is the foundation of everything we enjoy. I was very struck by a remark by Mr Raven, that reconciliation is the basis on which we enjoy justification.

R.T. Well, these things are worth thinking over. It all comes into "I have manifested thy name", that the Lord has made God known as Father and that was not known before. God was known in the old economy, but in the incarnation and the pathway of Jesus there has been a manifestation of God as Father. His name has been manifested among us to bring us into this area of undisturbed and known affections.

E.C.B. I think it would help if you would expand your remark about the new covenant so that we get the two sides of the thing complete. We have that in the cup, do we not?

R.T. Yes, the new covenant is going to change things. Israel is not at rest with God yet because they have not come into the good of the new covenant, but when they do they will be at home with God. He says, on the basis of the blood of Christ, "Giving my laws into their hearts, I will write them also in their understandings" (Heb 10: 16) and they will be at home with God. That is the new covenant as I understand it. God meets our needs for us to be at peace and to be at home with Him.

E.C.B. So that the expression that has been used by others that the new covenant makes known the disposition of God is very helpful in the explanation, is it not?

R.T. Yes, indeed it is, but then, as we have said, reconciliation brings us to see God's arrangements and that is what we come into in the Father's love. We come into the Father's arrangements. We come into His house where things are according as He would have them and everyone in those arrangements has a best robe and a ring and shoes.

M.A.J.T. "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God", 1 John 3: 1. That is the Father's

house, is it not?

R.T. Very good: "See what love". He brought it near to us in the person of His Son. The way that the Lord moved among the disciples impressed them that there was a manifestation of someone greater. So that at the end of the gospel He says, "my Father and your Father ... my God and your God", chap 20: 17.

J.S.G. Would you say more about the Father's name: "I have manifested thy name". Would the Father's name in itself involve grace and love in expression? The Lord had mentioned, as you say, in chapter 14: "In my Father's house", so that they would be attracted to the thought, would they not?

R.T. Yes. The answer to Philip's question is: "Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me...?", chap 14: 9. The Lord in that sense was not calling attention to Himself though everything was there in Him, but He says the works that I do are the Father's works. It was in manhood it was seen, such a Man indeed, but what was seen really was the Father, was it not? It is difficult to explain these things in a sense, but there was something greater and deeper than what was expressed in Christ and it was all leading to the Father. What would you say?

J.S.G. One thought of it would be that the perfect and holy and pure character of what the Father is has come into expression through Jesus making known His name. The Father's name would be that it is known, the perfect and beautiful character that has come into expression.

R.T. Yes, and He says, "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world". The Father drew us to Christ. It is a very fine touch. We sometimes think that we have been drawn to the Lord and the Lord has drawn us to Himself, but the Father drew us to Christ. He was operating there on the line of purpose, as we said, before ever there was a spark in us; He drew us to Christ and placed us in His hands to be formed in the grace and love of Christ, formed in affection so that we are suited to the

Father's presence without a question being raised, but to bask in the sunshine and the warmth of that love.

J.A.B. It says, "but he that loves me shall be loved by my Father", John 14: 21.

R.T. Say some more about that.

J.A.B. We know the Father as we know the Lord. I was just thinking of these affections.

R.T. It is very beautiful that the Lord speaks of them as men: "I have manifested thy name to the men". It is not the sinners, not a question being raised, but they are men. I think the sense of the Father's love brings about a certain maturity with us so that we know that we have a home and we belong to a scene where affections are flowing without being disturbed. He says, "They were thine, and thou gavest them me", so we may say that we are brought home.

We are brought to see that, before we knew and loved Christ, the Father was operating and He put us into Christ's hands, you may say, like Joseph's two sons. They were in Joseph's hands, but then the great end is that they are brought to Israel; for us, brought to the Father, to have His name named upon us and to be in the dignity of all that belongs to the family.

D.J.H. The Father's operations are something we do not think of much; we think of the Lord and the Spirit, but the Father has made us fit. It is interesting to ponder the Father's operations. They are all in love.

R.T. It would give us a deeper tone and more wealth in our response to the Father that He drew us to Christ. He put us into the hands of the Son to fashion us, to pass us through the exercises of Romans, if you like, to make men to be brought to a realm where the Father does not have to raise any questions, but He says, "Bring out the best robe"; there is something formed under the hands of Christ that, you may say, can wear the robe.

D.J.H. That would be a man: "the men whom thou gavest me" could wear the robe.

R.T. That is so. It is not what belonged to us in the children state which, in that sense, is settled and gone. We are brought into this place where we can be before the Father's face. It is "out of the world". These things are not known in the world. "Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him", 1 John 2: 15. We may engage ourselves in things that the work of Christ has placed us beyond and it hinders our coming into the enjoyment of the Father's love. We do not take these things up; we just say them in passing, but the world would interfere and spoil us from enjoying the undisturbed relationship that the Father would have us in.

H.J.T. I think it is all very blessed. Would you say a further word on Genesis 48? What is conveyed in the kiss as distinct from the blessing?

R.T. What would you rather have? That is the test for us.

H.J.T. I would sooner have the kiss.

R.T. Well, it was, maybe, not always like that. Maybe at some time you would rather have had the blessing first. Jacob was like that. He was a man who wanted the blessing. But maturity says, I would rather have the kiss than the blessing, does it not? There have been times when I would rather have had the blessing. We sometimes think we are going in for Christianity because of what we can get out of it. But the kiss gives a touch to the blessing. The blessing is all the sweeter when you know that the kiss was there first.

M.J.W. So the world should see the difference in us in our being in the gain of this love, but how can we grow in the reality of it? I am tested in speaking about these things.

R.T. Well, I remember Stanley McCallum, at the beginning of an address, saying, We often speak about laying hold of sonship, but tonight I would like to speak of sonship laying hold of us. I think that is how we come into the gain of it. If you want to know the Father's love, be a son. Wear the robe and live in the dignity of it. If we are world-bordering and going into the world, we do not enjoy the Father's love. But the persons who come into the joy of the Father's

love are those who place themselves and live in the joy and dignity of sonship.

B.W.W. I have noticed in that section in Genesis 48 that consistently it is Israel and not Jacob. I suppose that is an evidence of where the man was and of his greatness, because he was the greatest man there, greater than Joseph: Joseph had to be corrected.

R.T. Yes, when he says, "let my name" – the name of Israel - "be named upon them" (v 16). They are brought into the dignity of the family. So the question raised is good: how can we know more of the Father's love? Well, live in the family! Do not go outside the family or the family characteristics! We have seen some families go below what belongs to their dignity and they have spoiled their name. Live in the family atmosphere! Live in the family status! Live in the dignity of "let my name be named upon them"! That is what the Lord says here: "out of the world". That is where He has led them.

The love of Christ leads us "out of the world" to come into this area where we have the Father. Then He says, "I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world". I think as we remember these things we are helped to enjoy and live in the Father's love in a deeper way.

M.A.J.T. You keep emphasising "out of the world" but the Lord Jesus was praying to His Father because we are in the world. Do we not know it! I often say, where do we draw the line? Spiritually we are out of the world, but it says in verse 11: "and these are in the world".

R.T. Well, there is a common brethren expression, that we are in it but not of it. That helps us. But where was our origin? "He has chosen us in him before the world's foundation", Eph 1: 4. Our origin was there before the world. So we are in it and we prove grace in it and mercy, we prove these attributes of divine love, but we have to remember that we do not belong here. We are not of it; and, as we keep ourselves in that, we keep ourselves in the Father's love.

B.H.C. The Father delights in variety. I was thinking that sonship is not a mould but is a relationship, but then there would be variety in that relationship, do you think?

R.T. Yes, indeed, all like Christ, but there is variety, as you say, and personality and distinctiveness. Sonship gives us the status. The son has liberty. Sonship emphasises that. It brings us into the liberty of all that is in the house. Sons can be in the house at perfect rest and perfect liberty.

B.H.C. When we are young we tend to think that we would like to be like someone else. We might think, I would like to be like that brother. Do you think that, from the Father's viewpoint, He would see everyone distinct in his setting: 'Each with some trait of Him who loves so well'?

R.T. Yes, He would. Think of the Father's eye resting on that, as you say, some feature of His Son! Because the Son is so great, it requires them all to set Him out, you may say, but He sees in each one something of His Son. So He has given the Spirit of His Son into our hearts for that very purpose: "But because ye are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Gal 4: 6. So there is responsiveness, and that brings in the distinction, as you have said, in which the Father finds His pleasure.

J.S.G. When He says, "I have given them thy word", does that convey that it enters into the Father's love that His thoughts should be known?

R.T. Yes, I am sure it does. He says elsewhere that the words that He was saying were the Father's words; He was not speaking from Himself. As the disciples followed the Lord, especially as in John's gospel in these chapters, you can see the Lord is leading them out all the time until He comes to the end when He says, "my Father and your Father ... my God and your God", chap 20: 17.

E.C.B. In connection with what He says in chapter 15 - "for all things which I have heard of my Father I have made known to you" (v 15) - here, speaking to the Father, He says, "I have given them thy word". That embraces the "all things", does it not?

R.T. I think so, and how they would cherish it: "I have given them thy word". The way it is put in the verse involves that the word has formed them because it says the world has hated them. There is some formation in the saints as the Father's word has been given us by Christ.

E.C.B. This chapter in particular - and much, indeed, of John's gospel - is quite apart from our responsibility or our sins, is it not? Yet you could preach the gospel from this chapter; there is no reference to sin in it or forgiveness or redemption, anything like that, but what it is to be drawn into the place where the Father loves you as He loves Jesus.

R.T. It gives us a view of God's thoughts about us. Someone described the chapter as the heart of Christ about His own. He is speaking to the Father about them. As you say, it is not a question of their history but that they were persons who were there in purpose and the work of Christ has brought that purpose to light. The work of Christ has unfolded divine counsel and divine purpose and now He is leading them, through that work, into the area where that purpose is to be enjoyed.

E.C.B. You might even put it that the death of Christ has been the key which has opened the door to the display of divine purpose.

R.T. That brings in the new covenant in the way that God has moved and the way that Christ has moved in opening the door. That is a good way to put it: it is the key. It has unfolded a great wealth of divine love that was beyond the sin question altogether.

E.C.B. It is an interesting thing - not to depreciate in any way the value of Christ's work - but once you have the key and open the door, you can after that no longer be thinking about the key; you are thinking about what is opened up for you.

R.T. So we are brought into the Father's house, brought to know the Father's love. Then it says, "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them". That is very beautiful, that the Lord confers that glory upon us, the glory of sonship: "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one".

The Lord has conferred that glory on us, so that we can be at home in the presence of such love and such greatness.

H.A.H. Mr Darby said that the death of Christ opened the floodgates so that the full tide of love might flow over sinners.

R.T. Well, it is not only opening the door for God to come out; it is opening the door for us to come in. We go in in the same way that God has come out, through Christ by one Spirit (there is the door) we have access to the Father. So we are brought in and the Lord says, "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given them".

That is reconciliation too, that we are brought there in the wealth and dignity that belongs to Christ.

E.C.B. We may perhaps over-define it by saying it is the glory of sonship. It is the place of a glorified Man before God. It may involve sonship, but "the glory which thou hast given me" is that the Father has raised Him from the dead by His glory and given Him a place in glory, as man, and that is the place He has opened to us.

R.T. Yes, I think it is love in full expression. It is what He goes on to: "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them". There is a glory about that: "and the glory which thou hast given me I have given them". Think of being before the Father like Christ!

'Like Jesus! Grace supreme!
Like Him before Thy face;
Like Him, to know that glory beam
Unhindered, face to face!' (Hymn 72)

That is how the Lord serves us and brings us in to know the Father's love and to enjoy the wealth of the house.

B.W.W. Would you say a little more about that last verse: "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them"?

R.T. The only impression I have about it - and I only thought of this a few minutes before the meeting - was that it was in them, not only upon them: "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them". It is right in here.

B.W.W. In which direction does it flow?

R.T. I think it would involve the Holy Spirit. "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Gal 4: 6) so that we can enjoy that love in all its blessed sweetness. But it is undefinable, as far as I could say.

E.C.B. Has it not been suggested that that last line approaches what is collective?

R.T. I think it would; the whole chapter has what is collective in view, does it not?

E.C.B. I was thinking of the force of what you were saying yesterday about our understanding the assembly. It has sometimes seemed to me that this verse underlies, "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises" (Heb 2: 12): "I in them".

R.T. Yes, so that there is a company responsive to His touch. Think of the Chief Musician with a company enjoying that love! How responsive they would be! As it is enjoyed in its fulness it finds a way of expressing itself undoubtedly.

J.S.G. Do you think it would link with the inbreathing in chapter 20?

R.T. I am sure it would, that there are these inward activities. That is good. Say some more about it.

J.S.G. If we prove the power of the Father's love as life in us by the Spirit, other things would seem strange.

R.T. I think that is a good suggestion because He breathed into them and you get the impression in that section that He was conveying divine feelings to them: "he breathed into them, and says to them, Receive the Holy Spirit" (v 22); and then He speaks about remitting and so on. I think that "the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them" would mean that we have divine feelings and we act in the divine character.

J.S.G. That was a fresh challenge to me because we are not always up to it, but are you suggesting that we have to keep the divine thought before us so that what is normal might more and more mark us?

R.T. Yes; it would come out in our character, that we are acting like sons and in the sense of knowing the Father's love in all its blessed sweetness.

How are you getting on?

I.M. If we think of these things as being from before the world's foundation, it is quite weak of us to think that we do not know very much of them, is it not? That is so nevertheless, and I am grateful for what is being said because it is for our acceptance in the gospel, flowing out of that and living in it.

R.T. Yes, we are brought into a great wealth. The illustration used to be used of a basket floating in the ocean; the basket could never contain the ocean and yet the ocean is in the basket. We are brought into a great area of divine wealth that we can never compass or fathom, but we are in it in all its blessed fulness, and in the joy of it there is produced a certain maturity and a character in our affections.

D.J.H. Is that something like "I in them"? Must it not draw out the Father's love if He sees Christ in us?

R.T. "I in them and thou in me" brings out the sweetness of the family, does it not? What a thing to be in an area where there is this closeness and these feelings in operation and love enjoyed!

D.J.H. It is a wonderful mutuality but it all springs from the Father's love.

R.T. And it all takes character from the person of Christ. He says, "Father, as to those whom thou hast given me, I desire that where I am they also may be with me". What it must have been for the Lord to be with the Father! But He would not be there alone. It says, "that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me". The glory that Christ has been given sustains and gives character to the whole realm.

E.C.B. Is some of this connected with "I know a man in Christ", 2 Cor 12: 2?

R.T. I am sure it is. You get some sense of maturity.

E.C.B. Sometimes it has been suggested that that was limited to Paul, but I do not think that is right. "The men whom thou gavest me out of the world" are the same ones who know a man in Christ, are they not? Do we know that?

R.T. The Lord, I think, is serving us to bring us to know something about it, and that is new creation. We are brought into this wealthy area where the Father finds His delight in His sons. It says, "and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge", Eph 3: 19. So that in a scene that is immeasurable we have a point of reference, and that is the love of Christ and the glory of Christ, as He speaks about it here, in a scene that we can never compass. Christ is there to hold us in relation to a scene that is immeasurable.

H.A.H. Paul in Ephesians 3 bows his knees to the Father. Do you think he was in the consciousness of the Father's love and, as strengthened by the Spirit, the first thing he asks is "that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts", v 17? Is that like "I in them"?

R.T. That is very beautiful. You could say more about that.

H.A.H. I wondered if it showed that Paul, rising to the height of his calling and knowing what it was to be "a man in Christ", was in the consciousness of the Father's love. Was that what the position "in Christ" led him into?

R.T. Very good. It is a very fine reference and I think that is what it would do with us; it would cause us to bow our knees to the Father, a love that knew us before time began but gave us to Christ:

'Thou gav'st us, Father, in Thy love,
To Christ to bring us home to Thee'.

I think that is what the Lord is leading us to:

'Suited to Thine own thoughts above'.

(Hymn 88) He is bringing us home, suited to this holy realm because, as we have said, there are no questions to be raised.

R.G. In Luke 15 there is no record of the son taking the robe off. Is it important that we are sons all the time?

R.T. It can never change. Sonship is not something we work up to but, as you say, it is what we are. God has brought us into it by faith in Christ Jesus. The Lord has made sonship very attractive. What John saw was "a glory as of an only-begotten with a father", John 1: 14. We are brought into sonship in its feelings, its joys and its liberty.

E.C.B. What was said connects with what you were saying earlier about being out of the world, because you cannot wear the best robe in the world.

R.T. That is very good, and the more we know that love, the less we will want to be near the world. "Love not the world, nor the things in the world", 1 John 2: 15. Loving the things in the world causes a certain disturbance with us and we lose the joy of being at home in the presence of a love like this.

D.J.H. So Paul says, "giving thanks at all times for all things to him who is God and the Father", Eph 5: 20. It is an interesting expression: "to him who is God and the Father". It is a test for everything, whether we can give thanks at all times to Him who is God and the Father. It would preserve us, would it not?

R.T. Yes, indeed. We are living in the joy of that relationship so that sonship has really laid hold of us because the Lord never lived for a moment outside the joy of that relationship. Disturbances come in with us as we know in our practical experience, but the Lord is serving us that we may be led into this area of undisturbed affections.

D.J.H. So it is not a question of whether there is any harm in this but can I give thanks to the Father for it.

R.T. Very good.

J.C.E. It is remarkable that in chapter 17 it speaks of the Son demanding certain things of the Father and that He will not demand certain things: "I do not demand that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them out of evil".

R.T. What an expression it gives us of His love!

J.C.E. Yes, it does!

R.T. It is like the high priest with the breastplate on and the stones in it. John 17 is something like that, you see something there of Christ and His feelings for the saints. There they are upon His heart in all their beauty, in all their dignity, and He is going into the presence of God and saying, Here they are, how beautiful they are!

A.G. I was thinking of the Father's supply in the way of daily care, the mention of the sparrows and the hairs of our head all being numbered. If there is a drought, it soon gets noticed, but the Father cares for us every day.

R.T. Yes, He comes down to us in that way in His providence and His care and, indeed, that extends to all men, to give us some impression of the kind of Father that He is, that there is nothing outside His ken. But these things are the blessing, you may say, that we spoke about earlier. I think He reaches us first through the blessing, the richness of His grace coming to us in the blessing, but He wants us to come to know the kiss. He wants us to come to know not only the attributes and the way He has shone out in His grace and His mercy, but He wants us to know His heart, and there is much more in His heart than we learn in His attributes, and He brings out something of His heart here that the love with which He has loved Christ should be in us. The great end is that there is a company who are "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has taken us into favour in the Beloved". We live in that favour. We continue in it, in its sweetness and its blessedness. I trust we have not made these things complicated but attractive. The Father has wonderful thoughts about us, greater thoughts than we can ever devise, as has been demonstrated in the younger son. He could never have thought about that robe. The Father has greater thoughts for us than ever we could imagine, and He would bring us to know something of this favour that He has taken us into, "into favour in the Beloved".

E.C.B. It is a great thing to see that because Christ is there I am there. I was thinking of what was said earlier, that we do not need to make an effort to take these things on; you just take them on, that because Christ is there, I am there.

R.T. It gives us title and it sets us at home, that in the presence of this there is Someone that we well know, Someone who has had to do with us in our sins and had to do with us when we were far away. And as I have said already, He is a point of reference in a scene that is immeasurable: "and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge".

LONDON

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Key to initials

(London unless otherwise stated)

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"A VEIN FOR THE SILVER"

David Duthie

Job 28: 1

The book of Job has been referred to as the textbook of creation. In it many things are spoken about that are not even touched on in Genesis. Also, whereas the Psalms have the Jew primarily in mind, Job has more the Gentile, and therefore it must bear some relation to ourselves in the present time. The verse read speaks of "a vein for the silver". No doubt this would be literal, one of the proven facts of creation, but God also uses creation to indicate what is in His mind; He certainly did to Job. Therefore I seek help to speak in a moral and spiritual way of the silver vein, which might suggest redemption and its scope. But before I do I would like to say a little as to the Redeemer. Job also spoke of the Redeemer; he says "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and the Last, he shall stand upon the earth" (chap 19: 25), "the Last" being a divine title (see Rev 22: 13).

Job speaks of it in the sense that it was future. For him this was the case, but how much he understood what he said I could not say, only that he knew it. Now we do not speak it in the same sense. We can speak from the point of view that the Redeemer has indeed stood on the earth and by His standing on the earth He has been marked out as one distinguished above every other man. Beloved, how distinguished Jesus is!

As to the manner of His coming into manhood, into a body prepared for Him, the angel's testimony declared that "the holy thing ... which shall be born shall be called Son of God", Luke 1: 35. The Redeemer has to be one who had absolutely no part in any liability.

Every other man was part of a fallen race and added to the guilt. Jesus in holiness was apart, yet being who He was, and in the condition into which He came, He was equal to and qualified to redeem. When He actually came all heaven was aglow and in rapture; "Glory to God in the highest", the angel said, "and on earth peace, good pleasure in men", Luke 2: 14. Never before had there

been such a moment. Again, after thirty years of mostly secret history in which He grew in favour with God and men, He moved out and identified Himself feelingly and sympathetically with the godly remnant. How beautiful! How the quality and character of that humanity shone, finding heaven's approval! The genealogy in Luke's gospel goes back to Adam, thus establishing, on the principle of grace, the fact that the Lord Jesus was related to all men. When He began to preach in the synagogue in Nazareth He was distinguished there also; it says that they "wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of his mouth", Luke 4: 22. This, as so many other instances in the life of Jesus, shews that as Redeemer He was not only equal and qualified but He was also willing. The gospel is presented that this glorious Person, the One whom Job spoke about as "my Redeemer", may become yours. In dying He "by the eternal Spirit offered himself spotless to God" (Heb 9: 14), pleasing to the last moment when God chose to make His soul an offering for sin.

God chose through that precious death to work out redemption. Atonement was made, redemption's price was paid in the shedding of that precious blood. In resurrection He was selected, raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, and now - He has entered into heaven itself. From this position of highest exaltation and in virtue of His glorious accomplished work the "vein for the silver" of which Job spoke has now been opened up. I suggest that it is to be located in Romans 3: 24.

Earlier on in that epistle man's responsible, guilty condition is shown and he is under charge. God then brings forward what He has secured in Christ, what is available for faith to lay hold of: "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood". Redemption is in Him and involves that every charge has been fully met. For the believer all is cleared, he is forgiven, justified, and that freely: what an offer on God's part! As it is traced through, the vein for the silver again appears in Ephesians 1: 7.

Redemption there places the believer in the area of God's purpose where all the blessings in God's heart of love are to be known. How

precious the knowledge of being accepted in the Beloved, and of knowing God's favour! That is what the younger son in Luke 15 was brought into, he was lost and he was found. I would venture to say that the finding involved the work of redemption, he was brought back. In being brought back he was clothed in the best robe, the ring was put on his hand, shoes on his feet, and the tatted calf killed. Out of the fulness of his heart God is ready to share what He has found for His own satisfaction; the word is, Let us eat and make merry. Furthermore, the vein for the silver continues and is again seen in verse 14 of that chapter. There it has to do with the redemption of the body: how precious!

The love of Christ is such that it will not be satisfied until it has its objects in conditions of glory, the redemption of the acquired possession. This we await as Romans 8: 23 tells us. The believer awaits transformation when he will have a body like unto Christ's body of glory. In the meantime the Holy Spirit is available for present enjoyment and help. Paul says "in whom also, having believed" (that is in Christ) "ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance". As I understand it, the sealing is for God, the earnest is for the believer, and as is referred to elsewhere in Scripture, the anointing is for testimony (see 2 Cor 1: 21,22). The work of Christ has brought all these blessings within the range of humanity and they are held out tonight for the acceptance of faith. The word in Revelation 5: 9 acclaims the Lord Jesus as the One who has redeemed to God by His blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation. How glorious is the Redeemer and how extensive His work in redemption!

May each and every one of us tonight grow in appreciation of the Redeemer. May each one know what it is to locate for themselves the "vein for the silver" and may the Lord Himself be pleased to use the word to this end, and for His own glory.

EDINBURGH

1993

PRAYER

1 Thessalonians 5: 17,18; James 5: 13

Pray without ceasing, pray!
God's throne's a throne of grace.
His power exceeds the greatest needs
Of those who seek His face.

In everything give thanks,
E'en when the heavens seem brass.
The Father's love is e'er above
Whatever comes to pass.

If one should suffer ill,
His sickness find no balm,
Then let him pray and in this way
His prayer begets a psalm.

But persevere in prayer,
This is our subject part,
Though our request may have to rest
'Till God has searched the heart.

In Spirit we must pray,
And ne'er repeat in vain.
The Saviour's name God's ear must claim
And thus our cause maintain.

Then prayer will turn to praise,
And praise to worship lead.
God justified, hearts satisfied,
For we have met His need.

PRAISE

Praise without ceasing, praise
The Saviour for His love;
'Tis He who came His own to claim,
And holds them there above.

He found us in our sins,
And suffered for them all
On Calvary's tree, so that we're free
To answer to His call.

Our calling is from heaven,
We know the Christ as Head,
In glory bright He dwells in light,
Who suffered in our stead.

Our Lord will come again

To earth where once He trod.
Like Him we'll be - the Firstborn He.
All glory to our God!

J.C.Evershed