

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

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THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR CHRIST AND CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE FATHER

2 Peter 1: 17-19; 2 Samuel 7: 18-29

J.A.G. I have been thinking about the love of the Father for Christ and the responsive love of the Lord to the Father. It is as here that Peter can describe the character of that voice which indicates the depths of feeling that the Father has for the Son. On the mount of transfiguration, the Lord's face "shone as the sun" - "his garments became white as the light"; as we know, it is the kingdom that is in mind, but I think what underlies it is the powerful, blessed relations between the Father and the Son. Deborah says, "But let them that love him be as the rising of the sun in its might", Judg 5: 31. It is a very blessed contemplation to see the Father's deep, absolute, complete affection for Christ, then Christ's full and blessed response to the Father. The Father, I would say with all reverence, thoroughly enjoys His place in fatherhood, and the Lord Jesus is perfectly happy in the full enjoyment of His place in sonship. This bears very much upon us, because we are taken into that relationship. You are loved by the Father with the love with which He loves Christ. The character of our answer to that love is of the same character as Christ's answer. We have the spirit of sonship, the Spirit of God's Son, helping us into the intensity of the intimacy of our links with the Father so that the Spirit of His Son is in our hearts crying, Abba Father. How near and how blessed that is! The Lord might help us to rise to the blessedness of our enjoyment of these links that we have.

I thought that in the scripture in 2 Samuel, down to verse 17, there is, in type, some evidence of the Father by His Spirit strengthening David in the inner man. God is thinking about Solomon. He is showing David how He capacitated him to have the same kind of appreciation for Solomon as He had. Then when David

goes in and sits before Jehovah - how blessed that is! - there is the response in sonship as he is able, in the type at least, to apprehend fully "what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge", Ephes. 3: 18. The Lord might help us, give us a quickening touch, to cause us to move increasingly into the enjoyment of our relations with God.

D.E.B. The first reference to love in the Scripture comes to mind - "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest", Gen 22: 2.

J.A.G. That is fine. There is no word of Ishmael. Isaac, there it is; the father and the son going on together, the burnt-offering in mind, and the manifestation, in type, of the fulness of God's love for us, but primarily, of course, of Abraham's committal to God. Think of what it meant to Abraham to stretch out his hand and take the knife to slaughter his son. Think of God's commending His love to us. I, at least, need much help to move into the warmth and blessedness of the Father's love.

D.E.B. John says, "and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father", John 1: 14. That is for our contemplation.

J.A.G. Yes, I think so. I think you could say that of David as he went in and sat before the Lord. He is beyond his dispensation. He is touching what is eternal, and all this and more is available to us: it is all ours and belongs to us - to every brother or sister here. This belongs to you; it is yours. The Father's love in its fulness is upon us, God shed ding it abroad in our hearts by His Spirit and, as associated with Christ, the Lord Jesus helps us and educates us in all the different features and qualities of sonship, but we answer to the Father's love in the character in which Jesus answers to it.

G.C.B. The scripture comes to mind, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand", John 3: 35.

J.A.G. We are to help one another. "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand": He is absolutely restful and fully committed to Christ. He says, You will run the whole universe for Me.

E.F.W. It is a wonderful appeal in John 17. I suppose the disciples would have heard directly that appeal to the Father that the same love might be in them. What an objective! Could you say more?

J.A.G. Is that not wonderful, that they would be able to love Him as the Father loves Him? – “that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them”, v 26. You can see how headship is going to work, “I in them.” How blessed this is! I think we should restfully enjoy the Father’s love. This does not belong to the wilderness, it belongs to the land and we touch the land as here together.

J.W. Would this help us to develop in maturity. These are Peter's mature thoughts about the transfiguration and I wondered if David too is marked by maturity in the way he goes and sits before Jehovah.

J.A.G. Yes, they are both mature men and both men who have been adjusted. David had the idea that he was going to build the house. There is nothing wrong with that. Nathan says, Yes, the Lord is with you: go ahead. Eventually he gets the plan but he does not get the permission to build.

V.E.W. Did Peter discern in the Father’s voice that there was something there that he could hardly describe? He says, “such a voice.” He uses superlative language.

J.A.G. That is exactly what I thought: he cannot describe it. It is indescribable. But then the Father is not speaking to Peter. Although He had the disciples in mind, He is looking on Christ and He is saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight.” Peter does not say hear him here because he had already heard Him. I think what you are saying is fine, that the intensity of the affection is beyond human language to convey.

D.J.H. Is that affection seen in that Paul refer to “the son of his love”, Col 1: 13? He does not just say ‘his Son’, but “the Son of his love.”

J.A.G. I thought of that because this primarily is the kingdom. They are "eyewitnesses of his majesty", but then it is the Son of the Father's love. We have been "delivered... from the authority of darkness, and translated" into this blessed area where the rule of the Son of the Father's love is known. What a favour it is! We have to live in this!

E.C.B. John 17 to which our brother referred is present. The blessedness of the relationships about which Jesus speaks to the Father are present, not future.

J.A.G. It is the present time and Ephesians 3 is to be touched at the present time. Paul says, "whether we are beside ourselves, it is to God", 2 Cor 5: 13.

E.C.B. It has been said as to John 17 that Jesus first sets His own in His own place before the Father and then in His own place before the world. That is very attractive.

J.A.G. It is most attractive. When He sets them in His own place before the world, He breathes into them, the inwards of Christ being imparted.

D.E.B. Can you say more about the kingdom? We have thoughts in relation to the kingdom of what is even restrictive.

J.A.G. Naturally our thoughts of the kingdom are perhaps slightly arbitrary, but it is not that. It is "the kingdom of the Son of his love." Persons are in it willingly and happily, but what sustains and supports the kingdom is the relationship of sonship with God. I think sonship underlies everything, sonship and the functioning of the body. I think that is borne out in the reference you make to John 17: "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." What a blessed situation to be in!

D.J.H. I was reading something as to our needing to distinguish between faith and affection. We come into certain things by faith, but there are other things, and what we are speaking of is what we come into by way of affection.

J.A.G. Absolutely. Divine Persons are anxious that we might make way for Their love in our hearts. Think of how They have come into the economy, to serve us in order that we might be in the enjoyment of God's love, because ultimately God rests in His love in persons in sonship.

P.M. Does the fulness of the revelation of God necessitate that the Father's love for the Son should be made known to man?

J.A.G. Yes, I think so: it is the divine ordering and it relates to counsel. Think of God in His great ness: He can be satisfied in Himself, but He is going to fill the universe with men like Christ for His satisfaction.

P.M. It was made known in One who could respond to it in absolute perfection, and, as responding to it, has secured an answer to it in those who can equally respond to the Father's love.

J.A.G. In that chapter, He indicates what is in His mind in Matthew 17 as to the stater, and the sons being free: "take that and give it to them for me and thee", v 27. It is all working in Peter and it all comes out here. Is that not beautiful?

E.O. Would God's feelings be seen in that word, "Let my son go, that he may serve me"?

J.A.G. They would indeed. "Israel is my son," He claims him - my firstborn ... Let my son go that he may serve me", Exod 4: 22,23. Then He says if you do not let my son go, I will kill thy son thy firstborn.

E.C.B. Do the accounts of the transfiguration and what Jesus says to the disciples beforehand suggest that the kingdom is to be experienced in what the Father thinks of the Son?

J.A.G. I think so. I think that is all the background to the working out of it.

E.C.B. In Matthew, for instance, they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom, but you find that the Son of man is the Son of God. But there is nothing said about the kingdom on the mountain.

J.A.G. No, nothing. What is said on the mountain, of course, is to correct Peter's interruption but the clear point is the Father's delight in the Son: "*This* is my beloved Son", Matt 17: 5. 'Do not interrupt by speaking: let Him speak. Listen to what He has to say'.

E.C.B. Peter does not say, the Father said to us. He heard the Father speaking to the Son of which we have very little of the record in scripture.

J.A.G. I think this is exceedingly beautiful. He does not say, 'Thou art my beloved Son.' He is obviously looking at Jesus - it is a vision of course - and Jesus is looking at Him and His face is shining like the sun, like the sun at noon-day. That is Christ's response to the Father, and God the Father is looking at Christ and saying "*This* is my beloved Son".

R.E.T. So the Father is giving Peter the object. Is that not what we need?

J.A.G. We have a great object! What a Person Jesus is! What capability He has! He will run the kingdom, He will run the whole universe. Adam failed in his stewardship, but not Christ. The Son of God is on God's side and He is holding everything for God, and primarily in relation to the house.

J.W. If Christ is the object of the Father's affections and the object of ours, it would help us in communion with the Father.

J.A.G. I am sure it would: the Father is so desirous of telling us about Christ. He is the One who has drawn us to Christ: "Every one that has heard from the Father himself, and has learned of him, comes to me", John 6: 45.

D.E.R. Was the Father's delight in the Son because of His moral worth, and is not that what the Father can find delight in even today?

J.A.G. I think so. I think He finds in Jesus everything He ever looked for in man. Adam was only a figure of Him who was to come. All this was in the divine mind before time was.

R.E.T. Can you give us some help as to being in a state to receive spiritual impressions? Does Peter help us to get on the house-top?

J.A.G. I think the gospel does that. If you follow the teaching of the glad tidings, you are ready for the mystery, ready for heaven. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God", Rom 8:14. The Spirit is leading the sons of God, but He is leading towards the inheritance, towards the land, towards the great area where the Father's love is known. When you come to Numbers 21, there are the heaps of Abarim - the regions beyond are what is in mind "the breadth and length and depth and height" and in that area the love of the Christ is free: untrammelled. It could not be free here on earth. The Lord could not let His affections go, except amongst His own.

R.E.T. The sheet in Acts 11 is a wonderful thing is it not, coming down out of heaven?

J.A.G. Yes: if you were a Jew, you would need help about that, to see that there are others in the sheet besides you. There are a lot of brethren in the sheet besides you. This is just an aside, but you meet the Lord's people. There are many Christians and the Lord is doing great things apart from this meeting. He is going on with His work and the gospel is working. The counsel of God is being fulfilled.

D.A.B. There are, as we know, two words used for love. Is what you have in mind especially the one which Mr Darby says is 'more intimate and intense'. The Lord speaks of it in relation to Himself in John 5, that the Father loves the Son, but then He speaks of it in relation to us in chapter 16 and draws a special reference to the Father by referring to, "The Father himself has affection for you", v 27.

J.A.G. Is that *phileo*?

D.A.B. Yes. I thought that reference which is I think unusual - "the Father himself" - meant that the Lord had in mind not only that the intensity of the love should be experienced, but the Person whose love it was should be understood and responded to.

J.A.G. It is a big question whether we really believe all this. The act of faith is immediately introduced in the 'over-Jordan' epistles, Colossians and Ephesians - faith in the Lord Jesus and love towards all the saints.

D.A.B. Peter's belief of it was based on his experience: not on what he had been taught. "And this voice we heard ... being with him". Is that the secret to this that the belief we have in it should be based on what we have ourselves proved?

J.A.G. Yes, the Lord chose them. He says, You three come up with me, Peter, James and John. They did not learn this from Moses or Isaiah or Jeremiah or Ezekiel. It was an experience that they had.

D.J.W. It seems as if Peter calculated that this would be what would stir the saints up: "But I account it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up..." There is nothing like the presentation of this and the entering into divine relationships in love to stir the saints, is there?

J.A.G. Yes, he says, "And we have the prophetic word made surer." We have seen it ourselves. We have been in the presence of it. He says, the day is going to dawn and the morning star is going to arise. Is the morning star arisen in your heart? I think the morning star is the evening star as well.

D.E.B. According to the beginning of Hebrews, in the last days God "has spoken to us in the person of the Son, v 2. Is that the dominant way that the Father would communicate with us today?

J.A.G. We find it very difficult in ourselves to rise to the magnitude of divine thought, to move on the level of it, in its 'free-hearted liberality', you might say. That is how He has spoken to us, "in the person of the Son". He had spoken by the prophets and through the fathers-wonderful speaking! Peter speaks about it - "holy men of God spake under the power of the Holy Spirit", 2 Pet.1: 21 but the finality of speaking is "in the person of the Son." What speaking that is!

R.E.T. Tell us about the morning star.

J.A.G. Well, it is a sure sign the day is coming. You will have seen it, I suppose - no other stars in the sky - and He says Himself He is "the bright and morning star", Rev 22: 16. This is calculated to stir up the bride, that kind of affection for Christ.

J.S.G. Do you have more in mind as to the house?

J.A.G. I think that is what is in mind. Everything is built by someone, the writer says, speaking about Christ as Son over God's house; and that is what Jehovah is telling David. He says, Your son is going to be My son and it is he who is going to build the house. I will be his Father and he will be my son. Jesus is the pattern of the house.

G.N. Could you help us as to your impressions of the influence of divine love and its effects?

J.A.G. I think the primary influence of divine love in your heart is that it liberates you, you are set free. And if you are set free, you are delivered, you are free to answer to divine love itself, to answer to God and consequently you will love the brethren. You will find somebody who is moving in some measure in the gain of this, you will never hear them complaining about the brethren.

D.J.H. Does that enter into the reference made earlier to "the kingdom of the Son of his love? In a sense it is love that controls us. We do not need rules or regulations, or anything but this kind of love; if it were with us in power, everything would be all right.

J.A.G. Exactly so. "Who is image of the invisible God". As your heart is fully occupied with Christ you are absorbed with the greatness of the Person. He is the One in whom "all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by him ...".

D.J.H. It is very practical, as to our walk here, what we do where we go and so on. Everything would be regulated simply by a love of this character.

J.A.G. I think if we touched this line and were affected by this, we would have time for nothing else. The more you enjoy it, the more you want.

D.A.B. Do we see in Nathan the spirit of prophecy and the testimony of Jesus. As he speaks God's mind we see how full God's mind is of Christ.

J.A.G. Yes, and what He has done to David. The brethren here can go over all their own histories and say what the Lord has done for them. He says to David, "I took thee from the pasture-ground, 2 Sam 7: 8, took him up in the meeting, you might say. Here is the pasture-ground, is it not?

E.C.B. Would greater experience of the house have more influence on us?

J.A.G. Well, a house is for living in: that is what He is speaking to David about, dwelling and resting. Go on.

E.C.B. The character of the Father's house in Luke 15 is a place of perfect liberty and it tests everybody who is not in it.

J.A.G. Quite: so it is a place where reconciliation is known, where the peace-offering is known, fellowship is known, at that level. The father suggested that they should be merry. The son did not suggest that they should be merry: "let us eat and make merry", v 23.

E.O.P.M. We often refer to the fact that the fatted calf was in the house; the other things were brought out. Both Peter and David had to be in the presence of these things to get the gain of them. Could you help us as to how we keep ourselves in the love of God, how we keep ourselves in the divine presence?

J.A.G. I think it is dependence. It is a fine scripture at the end of Jude: "Praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God", v 20,21, and then the doxology follows; "But to him that is able to keep you without stumbling", v 24, I think the more we are cast upon God, the more we know God, the more we will become like Him. You will find that you have God's tastes and God's desires and God's outlook, holiness as a quality has been developed in you, righteousness also.

R.H.B. In Romans we are told that nothing can separate us from the love of God, but in Jude we are exhorted to keep ourselves in it. Can you say something as to that?

J.A.G. One side is your responsibility. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. God says to David, I have been with you wherever

you went. And He chastened him. God never compromises Himself or lowers the standard. You go to the Jacob side of things and you find all that. That is the struggle side of things which relates to his wages getting changed and business matters and he starts up on his own and he does not go to Bethel, but until he comes to the house, he is not really in communion with God.

J.W-w. In the scripture in Samuel it is one thing for God to speak to David through Nathan but it is another thing when David went in and sat before Jehovah. If we are in God's presence, are we in the presence of the source?

J.A.G. I think so. That is why I thought of David going in. There is the spirit of sonship in David - in type the answer in David to the activities of the Father by His Spirit strengthening him in the inner man, because he is going in and he has great scope, sitting down there: he is going in in power and gives expression to his great knowledge of God. I could not go into all the different titles and names of God that he uses. If you look at the first verse in the Bible, there is a footnote to "In the beginning God", and J.N.D. goes over almost everything in that footnote.

E.O. Is love a two-way matter? God is looking for that return, is He not? "Thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thy heart", Mark 12: 30?

J.A.G. I think so: we love because He first loved us. It is a poor thing if you cannot respond to love. Then God is capacitating us, as He has capacitated David, to have His thoughts of Christ and so He goes in and sits before Jehovah. How blessed that is! I do not think we do that enough. Take the local readings: we say, we are reading say in 2 Samuel 7. We read the chapter: we pray about it and do what has been said (and it is excellent advice) that you read the chapter three times you read the Synopsis, read what everybody said about it. When you go to the reading, you will know that everybody else has read what everybody said about it. But you get beyond that to your own links with God and you get something fresh

about it. That is the Spirit's leading. The Lord will come into that and expand that line in the meeting.

R.E.T. We need to come to the sensibility of what Christianity really is and what we can say about it.

J.A.G. I think this is Christianity; hence these features were manifest in Antioch. After a year Paul and Barnabas taught in the assembly a whole year – they must have manifested the thing in themselves, that they were in the enjoyment of it.

E.C.B. You can see that David had in mind breadth and length and depth and height. Is that not what is needed in the local meeting?

J.A.G. It is indeed: great expansion is needed. You are "fully able to apprehend." He goes over, you might say, all that God has done from Genesis 1 right up to the present day. The ministry of course is a great guide: it gets you on course, but look for the Lord to come in in addition. That is scripture. "As they were listening" - that is like reading the ministry and the Bible - "As they were listening ... He added and spake a parable, Luke 19: 11.

M.M. What is the force of David's question in verse 19, "And is this the manner of man, Lord Jehovah? "

J.A.G. I think it is the Son. That is the manner of man: Jesus is the manner of man. What else would you say about it?

M.M. It shone out in the Person of Christ.

J.A.G. The house cannot be built while there is war and conflict going on. He says to David - and David came to that himself - that he had been a man of blood and had made great wars and soon, but all the conflict is finished before the house begins to be built, and when the house is being built, there is no hammer or axe or noise at all. Everything fits in perfectly, "fitted together".

D.H. Is not that how it should be in our local meetings, the working out of things?

J.A.G. I think that is how it has to be. I do not think the building can proceed if you are engaged in warfare. They must be restful. There

is neither war nor evil occurrent. Everybody is enjoying their own links with God and their inheritance. You are under your own vine and your own fig tree, perfectly satisfied, and so the house proceeds. The building proceeds positively. David got the gain of this, his whole energy, all that he has, all his substance, is directed towards the house.

D.H. I was thinking about the ascent by which Solomon went up to the house of Jehovah, and the passage finishes, "Because Jehovah loves Israel for ever, therefore did he make thee king to do judgment and justice", 1 Kings 10: 9.

J.A.G. Yes I think that is very beautiful, because that bears on her contemplation, in type, of the Lord's distinctive relations with the Father. He says, "My Father and your Father." Watch how He does things! See how He goes up to God! J.N.D. says

"My soul in secret follows
The footsteps of His love."

Are we able to do that? Can we go through the gospels and watch how He moves? We are not always to be occupied with what is moral for that is settled: the kingdom does all these things. We touch what is spiritual where love is and feed on love's greatness, love's design and love's thoughts.

J.W. When we come to Solomon's reign, He settled these things, did he not? They need to be settled though, do they not?

J.A.G. They need to be settled, but it is not our main occupation. There is no food in conflict although you have to face up to it. In 2 Chronicles 32 Sennacherib comes up and Hezekiah puts the people on a war footing and the finest weapon that he has is praying to God.

P.M. Is this the normal result of a prophetic word that it leaves us with an impression of the character of the man who has done everything for God?

J.A.G. I think the prophetic word directs our hearts, if we follow, and we come to the source and the standard of it. The standard that God has in mind is Jesus.

P.M. It has been said we often think a prophetic word is when we have given the brethren a rebuke, but the prophetic word leaves the brethren occupied with Christ.

J.A.G. I think the true prophetic word has stimulation in mind. You are adjusted; you may be rebuked; you may be told that you are not able to judge yourself; but it leaves you with something positive. It leaves you with hope. It brings you back to God Himself.

E.O. The specific word to Peter was, "Follow thou me", and you have referred just now to the ascending Man, "I ascend". We are to keep our eye upon Him, where He is going, where He is leading us.

J.A.G. I think so. You can follow the Lord through the gospels and see how He deals with moral matters. We were reading in Matthew 23 this morning. How scathingly He sets out His judgment about the Pharisees! We were saying that the king is sitting in the gate from Matthew 23 to 26 and giving His judgments: and He gives them without reserve. But then that is not normal Christianity. Normal Christianity is occupation with Christ at this level. The normal thing for Paul and those with him was to be beside themselves to God. If we are sober he says, it is for your sakes (2 Cor 5: 13}.

E.C.B. Is that not what David is here? The prophetic word comes, but when David speaks to God, He never refers to failure. Do you think he has the morning star rising in his heart?

J.A.G. I thought so. I thought the day had dawned for him. God says, "It is he who shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son." That is light that he has in the soul. It is the morning star. And then he goes in and speaks of God. He is going to fail after this, and there will be conflict after this, and the manifestation of antichrist in Absalom and in Adonijah; but this is unfailing. This is the counsel of God.

D.E.R. The chapter brings out how deep was David's personal knowledge of God.

J.A.G. That is very beautiful: say more about it.

D.E.R. It is something we would desire to cultivate: then, maybe, we should receive more communications such as David received.

J.A.G. I think this is sonship at the level that God has in mind. He is appreciating God for what He is in Himself and for everything that He has done you might say, from Genesis 1 onwards. He appreciates God in creation. He appreciates God in redemption. He appreciates what God is doing for the brethren, for his own house and then for Israel thy people Israel." They are going to dwell in safety, nothing contrary is going to happen to them, they are going to be fully blessed.

H.A.H. You have referred more than once to his starting with Genesis 1, but he goes right through to Malachi without any sense of failure - "which thou redeemedst to thyself", and He says at the end, "And they shall be unto me a peculiar treasure", Mal 3: 17.

J.A.G. That is very beautiful. And he calls God 'Jehovah of hosts' which is a recovery title, you might say. The minor prophets, the recovered prophets, use that: they are counting on God and the immensity of divine resource. What you say is very beautiful. "They shall be unto me a peculiar treasure." He is going to write them up.

J.W. Is this love for God seen in the way in which he so richly provides for the house! thought he does not build it? Does it bring out his unselfishness and his love for God?

J.A.G. That is what I thought. I thought that in his complete committal to the house and his contribution of his own substance - he gave of his own substance - he is absolutely with God in what He is doing. He has completely accepted the adjustment and is happily in the gain of it. My concern is that we should ourselves be in the enjoyment of our place before God in sonship.

P.M. Is that a wonderful reference he makes? He says, "And what can David say?", not "What can thy servant...? ", but "What can David say. Does it bring out the intimacy of his own knowledge and link with God?

J.A.G. I think that is very beautiful. He goes in royally. It says, "And king David went in and sat before Jehovah, and said, Who am I, Lord Jehovah...?" He is conscious of his nothingness. And then he says, "And what can David say...?" 'I could not have done all these things apart from You.' That is what we would have to say. Go over your history, every person here can go over their history with God and see what God has wrought for them. If it had been left to ourselves, we would have been nothing, because we are nothing.

M.S. In 1 Chron 29 David says,"... in my affection for the house of my God I have given of my own property...", v.3, and later it says, "And the people rejoiced because they offered willingly, for with perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah", v 9. Do you think the affection that David had spread throughout the whole of the people and capacitated them to offer in this way?

J.A.G. Yes, indeed; that is influence. You see how influential he is. He gathers all the people: he says, this is no ordinary house that we are building, this is a palatial place. "This palace is not to be for man, but for Jehovah Elohim", 1 Chron 29: 1. Consequently you can see the necessity for the first section that we read because David is being fitted to live palatially. We need help to live palatially in Christianity, do we not?

G.C.B. Would you say something about the significance of David not building the house and Solomon building it.

J.A.G. David, as we know, is morally greater than the house. David in his history is a type of the Lord Jesus here. Solomon is Christ in glory: the work is all finished, there is no enemy or evil occurrent. So Christ has a free hand now to build this house. The whole work of redemption has been completed, God's nature has been glorified. He has nothing more to say to sin. There are no more Philistines or anything like that in mind. Christ has completed the work and so He is going on building the house from the point of view of the counsel of God. I think that is what is so wonderful. Job says "Thou canst be hindered in no thought of thine", Job 42: 2.

G.C.B. We should think of what Christ is now before God and what He has secured!

J.A.G. David and Solomon are one type, all one thing.

E.C.B. Does that connect with your remark about our not always being occupied with what is moral - that is David - but what is spiritual - that is Solomon.

J.A.G. Yes, when you go into heaven, when you go over Jordan, the moral side is finished. You are standing related to new creation in your own soul. I was quite impressed this week in the ministry meeting by Ephesians 5: "we are of his flesh", v 30 and "the two shall be one flesh", v 31. That is a very tangible thing and it can be located amongst the brethren.

R.E.T. Why do you say that David and Solomon are one: David was refused to build the house because he had shed so much blood?

J.A.G. I think David represents the side of grace in Christ here, because he takes the sword out of Goliath's hand.

D.A.B. God does not give that reason here? He does not refer to David's conflict. He seems to convey that He has a Man before Him whom it would need David and Solomon together to represent. There is the greater than Solomon in God's mind.

J.A.G. That is right. It needs all the types to set out Christ but all the types together are not equal to His greatness.

G.N. Reference has been made to the verse in Peter where the Father could have said 'in whom I have found all my delight.' Would that bear on what you are saying?

J.A.G. Yes, He does not say 'all my delight'; He says "my delight." His delight is in the saints. That is the burden of my spirit at the moment that we should realise that the Father's love for us at this present moment is the same as His love for Christ and His favour is shining upon us.

H.A.H. It is a matter of worship, is it not, the question the Lord put to His opposers, "How is he hrs son?" Matt 22: 45.

J.A.G. How is it possible? He says. There is the king in the gate again, the wisdom of the king in the gate.

D.E.B. In verse 22 here David says, "There is one like thee" and in the next verse, "And who is like thy people?" In a sense he is discerning in the people something that is a reflection of God.

J.A.G. Yes. He says, "For there is none like thee neither is there any God beside thee, according t II that we have heard with our ears. And who is like thy people, like Israel, the one nation in the earth that God went to redeem to be a people to himself, and to make himself a name, and to do for them great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thyself from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" It is like the father with the recovered son dressed in the best robe, the ultimate and happiness of blessing. But the Father sets it on.

D.J.H. I have wondered lately whether, while recognising the conditions publicly, we have said too much about the day of small things. It is a day of great things.

J.A.G. Indeed it is. There has never been any weakening, any diminution, on the side of God's purpose and counsel. He knew all about the breakdown. He knew everything that was coming.

D.A.B. We were speaking about taking types together. I suppose in a sense the house and the tabernacle have to be taken together to represent what God finds in His saints, David does not have to wait for the house to be built to go in and sit before Jehovah: his knowledge of God was complemented by His liberty to approach.

J.A.G. Yes; he is perfectly free and happy in his relations with God. He gets this word as a vision. I suppose Nathan can see the whole picture and he would convey it to David so that he can see it; and David goes in and he is speaking to God directly about this whole matter. How great the things are that He is going to bring in, how great the brethren are, how He is going to "bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance ... The sanctuary, Lord, that Thy hands have prepared", Exod 15: 17. Think of the intimate detail of God preparing His sanctuary. Look around at the brethren and

you see how God's hand God's service in love, has prepared them for where we are today.

D.A.B. So that when He speaks of them dwelling in their own place and being disturbed no more, it is in a sense God's dwelling place. That is what the house foreshadows.

J.A.G. Exactly, so the house and the tabernacle are one, because what is in the tabernacle is brought into the house. The house has in mind display, but the tabernacle is God dwelling. That is eternal: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them their God", Rev 21: 3.

E.C.B. The books of Samuel begin with a priest sitting by the doorpost but at this high point in the books we have a priest, really, in the holy place.

J.A.G. Exactly. He is manifesting the features of sonship that do not belong to his day.

E.C.B. The book of Proverbs brings out how much he was able to instruct his son in what was suitable in practical life.

J.A.G. The relations between them were such. "For I was a son," he says, "unto my father... and an only one in the sight of my mother", Prov 4: 3. Solomon was trained for this provision. What a place it was! When he was anointed there was conflict with Adonijah, and the assembly, in type, is brought into it and the prophet and the mighty man, and Solomon is caused to ride on the king's mule. But then they anoint him a second time. Well, you can anoint Him twice, three times, as many times as you like. You can commit yourself as much to Christ as you wish.

V.E.W. This was a heart matter with David.

J.A.G. It is very fine. He is not speaking about the affairs of the kingdom or the economy. He is thinking about God, sitting there, speaking to God about Himself, and he is being sustained in it. He is speaking to God about God's people: he is apprehending the breadth and length and depth and height, and, you might say, he is

knowing the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge, and he knows that God is able to do far exceedingly about what he could ever ask or think. Consequently, you can see, there is bound to be glory to God in the assembly. This is the kind of response, the kind of glory, that is going to God in the assembly in Christ Jesus forevermore.

E.C.B. In these Old Testament times, it would be the house that is filled to all the fulness of God, but now it is in persons.

J.A.G. Exactly. You get the impression here that David is filled full. The idea of fulness is there with him. He cannot hold any more, and that is why the first section that we read shows how God was moving with David to give him capacity to sustain his measure of the fulness.

E.C.B. David would have no difficulty in saying, "And we have the prophetic word made surer."

J.A.G. Exactly. He knows it. The day has dawned and the morning star has arisen in his heart.

D.E.B. So he takes up this title, "thou art that God" the Same. David knew from extensive experience that the God that had had to do with him in relation to what was moral was the same God whose presence he was entering as the unchanging One.

J.A.G. Exactly, and how affecting that is as we think of the eighth of John: "Before Abraham was I am", v 58. How that God, that Person Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground and lifted Himself up. We learn from Him. Your "soul in secret follows The footsteps of His love." Where are all the Pharisees? They all have to go. It does not say a word against the law. That is how to deal with what is moral, I suppose. It says, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her", v 7. And they go out and leave the woman. And He stooped down again. She is on different ground. I think she is on new covenant ground whether she appreciated that or not, because He is reconciling her. He is not condemning: He is reconciling the world to Himself. And what the new covenant has in mind is the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

R.E.T. Can you help us with regard to the purpose of God at the present day?

J.A.G. Yes, He wants you to be like Christ: that is the purpose of God for every one here. J.N.D.'s beautiful hymn 'Like Jesus in that place'.

R.E.T. Is the purpose of God that I might have a portion of His holiness?

J.A.G. You have it: it is yours. It belongs to everybody here, God's love. God loves you as He loves Christ. Suppose there was nobody else in the world but you and you belonged to Christ, He loves you as He loved Christ. Oh how we can rest on that!

J.W. Purpose really cannot be changed: it is affected by our responsible part. It is outside of that.

J.A.G. It is outside of that, hence the importance of the kingdom. To follow F.E.R.'s setting out of it is very beautiful and very orderly. Redemption brings us into the kingdom and in the kingdom our wills are subdued, and this is the moral side, because not only - as somebody said to me - are you body, soul and spirit, but you are will. You might not think so, but there is something in you that is going to run completely counter to the will of God. When we were married we had a verse from somebody - and I did not really appreciate it too much at the time - that says:

'He knows the sigh of sorrow
For the sigh of discontent
He will break your will asunder
Though your heart in twain be rent.'

That is what God does in His blessing to His people.

E.C.B. This all lies behind the remark that the wilderness is not part of God's purpose but of His ways.

J.A.G. Exactly.

"In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found."

The kingdom subdues our wills so that we are ready for the teaching of the covenant. He is going to write things on you.

E.C.B. That hymn does not say, in the desert God will teach thee what *you* are like; but in the desert God will teach you what *He* is like.

J.A.G. Well, we come to the close as Balaam does and he says, "What hath God wrought!" Num 23: 2. Look at Jacob and Israel, there are the two; that is the responsible side and that is the side of new creation and they are equal. So he says "What hath God wrought! "

J.W. David is completely subject to God here is he not? He comes to it that God's thoughts are greater than his thoughts.

J.A.G. Think of the Psalms that David wrote after this experience! The whole nation was enriched through it. It was a good thought that he and Nathan had about the house. Nathan says, Yes, that is very good: The Lord is with you. You do all that is in thy heart. God says, Wilt thou build me a house to dwell in? He does not get the permission but he gets the plan. He gets the pattern but he is not allowed to build. God says, That is my business. I am going to have my house for myself to live in and your son is going to build it. That is very beautiful! He says, Your son is going to be my son and he is going to build the house, I will be his father and he will be my son.

J.W. So that relationship of father and son was seen in David and Solomon and the influence of that relationship would pervade the whole house.

J.A.G. Of course it does. He says, It is all sovereignty. He is going over it in 1 Chronicles 28 and he says, God chose me to be king. He has given me many sons and out of all those sons he has chosen Solomon my son, and so all the people under David's influence become contributors to Solomon. But the devil says, We are not going to have this: we are going to have Adonijah. There are always crises, but all that is dealt with. No matter how weak the local position is, he says, Call me Bathsheba - bring in the assembly.

D.J.H. Where did David get the pattern?

J.A.G. It says he had it by the Spirit. I do not doubt that things are becoming formulated, you might say, in his mind. He did not get it just in a flash. He would say, That is not it: Adonijah is not it. And then he comes to Solomon, he comes to this section here and he sits and is contemplating and he is thinking and is weighing things up in God's presence. We need to do that.

G.C.B. It was the ark he thought of first as a very young man. We do not need to wait to be old to commit ourselves to it.

J.A.G. That is very helpful. It is the ark first and so God says, "I took thee from the pasture-grounds", 1 Chron 17: 7. 'I saw that you were interested in the meetings.' He started a history with God, he meets the lion and the bear, and is taken "from following the sheep." The sheep were following Christ: My sheep follow Me. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me", John 10: 27. It is encouraging for younger brethren to follow this line. Be at the meetings! Follow the sheep! Watch where the brethren go! Watch what they do! You will find salvation there. "My sheep hear my voice": they do not follow a stranger. God sees somebody is interested and takes him on. I think that is a very necessary thing, a necessary beginning. First of all it says, he heard of it at Ephratah, in his father's house. He was interested and exercised and so he "found it in the fields of the wood", Psalm 132: 6.

R.E.T. David found a lodging place for the ark. The people were not wholly with him and he found a lodging place, but when he studied that, he took them on to Jerusalem.

J.A.G. Yes, he found a lodging place in the house of Obed-Edom. Well, we have ministry, and it is very good to read it- 'Households in relation to the Ark' - and the ark and Solomon and David are all on that line.

T.H. Can more be said about hearing His voice and how that might apply to ourselves? At one time, "This is my beloved Son ... hear him." That voice was heard. That was said to the disciples, but I wonder if it would also have a bearing upon us.

J.A.G. I think it has a great bearing upon us because the Father has not stopped speaking. It makes the Lord's Supper and the service of God such an interesting place. You might say that a lot of things are by the way but the Father is delighting to call attention to Christ and to the saints. I think if you listen intently you will hear it. It requires maturity, but divine grace meets us and who can say how mature we really are? Divine grace serves us gently, and in the utmost kindness, that we might be drawn to God's side. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Rom 2: 4). That is how you know God for a start and the Lord's voice. It all comes by the Spirit and by way of impressions. You may have been praying, speaking to God, and something happens in your soul, and you can rely on that and build upon it.

T.H. I think what you are saying is right, that it comes through the Spirit and while one is praying. It comes also through the word in the ministry; that also would be by the Spirit.

J.A.G. Yes, it comes by the Spirit, whether it is the ministry meeting, the service of God, or wherever it comes. You are going over things in your mind and then it comes.

E.O.P.M. You might find it in the "fields of the wood", a little meeting, six brethren together, and you will find the ark.

J.A.G. Yes, the "fields of the wood" are not the best place for it. The place for it - and I understand what you are saying and it is very fine - is in the hearts of these few brethren. That is where it is.

E.O.P.M. I was thinking of what our brother was saying about the young people; they and sometimes us older ones, get discouraged and perhaps even despise the circumstances where God has set us. Is it a great thing to see that the greatest things are available in what may outwardly appear to be the most disadvantaged conditions?

J.A.G. Absolutely, and probably the conditions that seem most disadvantageous are the conditions that God has ordered in order that we might really get Christ. You can draw nothing from disadvantageous conditions so you are cast upon the Lord and He is an unfailing friend.

REDBRIDGE

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COMING TO CHRIST

James Alex Gardiner

Matthew 11: 25-30; 12: 1,18-21, 46-50

I trust that the Lord might help us to see how He moves in sonship, in appreciation of the Father, the Father's will and activities, and the Father's sovereign dispositions. In the midst of so much that would cause despondency and depression, the enjoyment of sonship, the blessedness of moving in the consciousness of the Father's love, is, I think, the antidote. The situation in chapter 11 is quite serious. John the Baptist was a great person. The Lord Jesus says that "there is not arisen among the born of women a greater than John the baptist", v 11. In this chapter John has got a bit down in his soul: he is not sure. You can hardly imagine that to be the case. You think of how John was in such power at the Jordan, how he was saying, "And already the axe is applied to the root of the trees", chap 3: 10, how he expresses his judgment on the Pharisees who come to his baptism. He tells people that what is needed is reality. We need no hypocrisy, no profession. He is the Lord's servant, sent before Him to make a way for Him, "to make straight his paths", Matt 3: 3. He is bringing down mountains and filling up valleys and making the way straight. And now he is in prison. His circumstances are changed and John is a bit down in his soul. Anybody who has any experience with God and has been in the path of His will will be able to tell you what it is like to be a bit down in your soul. John sends messengers to Jesus and says, "Art thou the coming one?" Imagine his saying that! He had seen the Spirit descending upon Him as a dove, but he would say, "Art thou the coming one? or are we to wait for another? " And Jesus says, Go back to John and tell him what you see and hear, that blind receive their sight, deaf hear, lame walk, and all the power and manifestation, the evidences of the anointing, and the Messiah are here. And then He says, "and blessed is whosoever shall not be offended in me." He is sympathetic with John the Baptist: he does not say anything wrong about him. What grace

there is in Christ, beloved! How we need to learn from Him. That is what He appeal to, as we hope to show.

But you marvel at the way He handles John the Baptist. He turns to the crowds and says, What did you go out to see? The Lord Jesus in the scope and wisdom of His service is not allowing any cleavage to come in between Him and John the baptist. The devil would be looking for that. He would say, Look, there is John in prison. Now, look at him, he is not in faith, say something about him. Jesus says not one condemnatory thing about John the baptist. This is a lesson for us, beloved, amongst the many other lessons which the Lord would teach us. He says, What did you go out to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What did you think it was? What was your estimation of John the baptist? He goes on to say that there has never been a prophet like John the baptist. He does not disparage His ministers. He makes way for an inroad into which the devil could come to bring in a cleavage. We need to learn these things. In His grace, He would instruct us. He says, There has been no greater born of women than John the baptist.

And then He speaks about this generation, Cain's generation, I suppose you could call it. He says, "For John has come neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He has a demon. The Son of man has come eating and drinking, and they say,... a friend of tax-gatherers, and of sinners." Well, that is a lovely commendation! Jesus is a friend of tax gatherers and sinners. And then He says, "And wisdom has been justified by her children." You would think He would be a bit depressed, because it goes on to say how He began "to reproach the cities in which most of his works of power had taken place, because they had not repented." They would say, Your ministry has not been very effective. You have done all this and where are the results? Where are the substantial results? Where is repentance? I believe, beloved, it is may be a good thing to raise the question with ourselves, do we know what repentance is? Do we move on continually as repenting sinners? The older you get, the more the Lord in His grace shows you how awful you really are. Do you believe that? He shows you the things that are in your heart.

Mark, as recovered, says there are thirteen things which come out of the heart of man. I think Matthew says seven. Mark, as moving in the depths of self-judgment as recovered, knows exactly what he is capable of, and so he is concerned that he might be maintained in a spirit of repentance, with tender affections, with concern, that nothing should intrude into his links with Christ and, consequently, he says the ground is going to bring forth fruit increasingly, thirty, sixty and a hundredfold. That is how we will increase, beloved. Matthew is decline. He says, "one a hundred, one sixty, and one thirty", Matt 13: 8, but that is not Mark. (I just say this in passing.) The cities had not repented, they had gone on in their hardness of heart and the works of power had evidently taken place in them and Jesus begins to reproach them. You think, Well, it would be very depressing. You would be quite downcast if that happened to you. But He is not living in His ministry; He is not living in His service: He is living, beloved, in the enjoyment of His links with His Father. "This is my beloved Son" is not, in a sense, new to Him. He always lived in the consciousness that He was His beloved Son and in whom His delight was found. Right from the start, God's delight, the Father's delight, was found in Him. That verse we quoted of J.N.D's:

"I trace the Man of sorrows,
His boundless grace to prove"

goes on to say:

"A child in growth and stature
Yet full of wisdom rare."

He was conscious of the Father's delight in Him. "Did ye not know", He says, "that I ought to be occupied in my Father's business?" (Luke 2: 49).

"Sonship, in conscious nature,
His words and ways declare.

Then He goes on: He expresses His judgment about Chorazin, pronounces woe on it and on Bethsaida. He says, "For if the works of power which have taken place in you, had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they had long ago repented in sackcloth and ashes." Then He

goes on to Capernaum. He is going round the cities where His works of power had taken place, and express in His judgment, and pronouncing woe on them. He is speaking judicially because it is a critical situation. The nation is about to apostatise. How awful the situation is going to be in chapter 12 when they sin against the Holy Spirit and say, by Beelzebub, prince of demons, he casts out demons.

The Lord Jesus here is in the van of the conflict, you might say. He is in the very fore front. He is at the very forefront; He is at the point, and the devil's forces are around Him. And in the midst of that situation He is not depressed. He is moving in victory and in triumph in His soul. He says "I praise thee." "At that time", the Spirit of God records that. He says in verse 24, "But I say to you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in judgment-day than for thee. At that time, Jesus answering said... " The answer to the Father is in Christ. Well has it been said that Christ is equal to answer the revelation of God. That is very beautiful and I think this is very wonderful. Imagine what the situation was like! The enemy, Hades' gates, are all around here, and He turns and says, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." Jesus is related to the purpose and the counsel of God. The whole situation is under responsibility. There is no mitigation in that way. But He knows that God is working out His sovereign will and He is related to it. "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes. Yea, Father", He says, "for thus has it been well-pleasing in thy sight." He is saying that to the Father. How blessed it is, beloved, and how favoured we are to listen to these precious words of the Lord Jesus in the situation in which He is in this section. I think that in them there is the manifestation of the power and force and the enjoyment of His place in sonship.

And then He speaks to somebody else. He is saying, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father and no one knows the Son but the Father, nor does anyone know the Father, but the

Son, and he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him." Would you like to know the Father? That is what He is saying to them. The Son is not the subject of revelation. Think how beautiful it is to see the way God guards the Person of Christ! Jesus came here in lowly manhood and He was vulnerable, His Person could be attacked.

You see how the Father guards Him. He is not the subject of revelation, but He says, the Father is the subject of revelation, and I may be pleased to reveal Him to you. How do you feel about that, beloved, to know the Father as Jesus knows Him? The situation is severe. There are persons who labour and are burdened. Is that you, beloved? There were persons here in this situation where the Lord was and they were labouring, they were burdened, they had a weight upon them, they had concerns. Think of the appeal of His love! It is as fresh and living and vital and true at this very minute as it was at that time. He would appeal to all of us. "Come to me," He says. 'Are you burdened, I will give you rest.' How is He going to give you rest? He is going to show us how to be with the Father, how to live in relation to the Father. What He has in mind is the will of God. That is why He speaks to the Father as the sovereign Lord of the heavens and of the earth. He says, You are working out Your counsel and Your purpose according to Your own mind. Indeed, Paul says, "according to the good pleasure of his will", Eph 1: 5, and He is appealing to weary souls, appealing to burdened souls - and who knows, beloved, the burdens that are amongst us, the secret burdens that persons carry, the secret exercises, the secret concerns, that perhaps you would never breathe to anybody? The appeal of Christ's love is to come to Him: "Come to me", He says. How accessible He is! How easy it is to get along with the Lord Jesus! 'Come to me': you tell me about it! I will give you rest. I understand your problems! The first rest here has been likened to the rest that comes to your soul in the glad tidings from the point of view of relief. He says, I will relieve you of your burdens.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me." Now, this is something else. See how He was yoked with the Father! Marvellous to contemplate the way the Lord Jesus conducts Himself,

how He moves. I think this very beautiful the way that He would shut the door against the enemy who would seek to bring in a cleavage between John the Baptist and Himself. There is great skill in that. That is royalty, that is moral authority. I want to speak about the moral side. There it is in Christ, how He handles things, how He does things positively! The great conflict is between good and evil, the working out of the tree of good and evil is the present moment, and it has all been worked out in Christ. So He says, "Take my yoke upon you." Pull with Me! Be yoked to Me! How blessed to be yoked to Jesus! "And learn from me": I will show you how it is done! "Learn from me." We speak about Mary sitting at His feet and listening to His word. It is very blessed, to be yoked with Him! I think it has been referred to as the yoke of sonship. You are bound with Him together, and you are with Him in relation to the will of God. "For I am meek and lowly in heart": that is not natural to any person in this room. "For I am meek", He says "and lowly in heart." I once heard it said that meekness relates to our links with men, and lowliness, our links with God. That is what Jesus was: (it says of Moses that he was the meekest man in all the earth. (Num 12: 3). That was up to this point. But here is Jesus, He says, "I am meek and lowly in heart. I will teach you, I will instruct you. I will show you, how it is done. "And ye shall find rest to your souls". Not only, beloved, will He relieve you of your burdens and relieve me of my burdens, but He will give us rest to our souls in the sense that we are completely satisfied in relation to our committals to the will of God, "rest to your souls." You will be able then with Him to enjoy the sabbath, and your outlook upon things is different. Matthew has not the moral line in teaching in priestliness that Luke has, but the moral line is running through it. You have come to Him, you have been weary and burdened and He has given you rest. You have taken His yoke upon you, you have learned from Him. You appreciate the fact that He is meek and lowly in heart. His yoke is easy; His burden is light, there is nothing difficult or burdensome about it. And so you can enjoy the sabbath.

The next chapter says, "At that time Jesus went on the sabbath through the cornfields." If you are yoked with Him, you will go with Him through the cornfields. You will begin to appreciate the fact that the Corn of wheat has died and it has brought forth many grains. You look around the room and you see the many grains that the Corn of wheat has brought forth. It is not exactly the death of Christ from the side of man's responsibility. It is not exactly from the side of "ye, by the hand of lawless men, have crucified and slain", Acts 2: 23. I think we are on the line here of the death of Christ in relation to the purpose of God. It is more like the deep sleep of Genesis 2. You are beginning to feed on the brethren, these ears of corn. How great the teaching is, the first-fruits are waved, then you count the weeks before you put the sickle in. You come to Pentecost, you come to the Spirit and then you start the harvest. And the harvest at this moment, beloved, is going in. The summer is not ended; the harvest is not past. Jeremiah has to say that, "and we are not saved", Jer 8: 20. That is not the case at the moment. It is almost the case, but it is not the case at the moment. Be with Him in the cornfields! You are touching the inheritance, the land of corn and new wine. The sabbath is there, the rest of God is there. Rub these ears in your hands and enjoy them! It is heaven's food, feeding on new creation and on the brethren. You are seeing what can be brought about as you move on this line with Christ.

But maybe there is somebody not able to do it. There is a man here and his hand is withered. He is not able to enjoy the sabbath - at least, he is not able to enjoy it in its fulness. What are we going to do with him? It seems as if at one time his hand may have been all right. I do not think that he was born like this, His hand became withered. He has one hand that is working, but he is not able to work to his full capacity, he is incapacitated. God does not want anyone to be incapacitated. I am not speaking in any condemnatory way or seeking to administer any rebuke because if anybody ever needed to be rebuked or needs to be rebuked, I have to put myself in that place. But, beloved, you will begin to know Him, not only as the One to whom you are yoked but He is going to serve you in love.

You are going to touch the Lord's Servant. Think of the grace of Christ! He says to this man, Rise up, come into the midst. "Then he says to the man Stretch out thy hand." Exercise it! Be concerned about it! I believe that is a word to all of us. Be exercised about your service! You are not wanting to be one-handed: Stretch it out! Think about it! Pray about it! Be with Him about it! Come up to your full potential so that you are able to appreciate what is in the brethren as everybody else does.

I just say that in passing, because the Lord is going on in His service here and He is fulfilling this beautiful verse that Isaiah brings in, "Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul has found its delight." Oh, how precious to have to do with such a One as that! This is Jesus, Jesus in His service If you have a slightly dried up hand, He will heal it for you. He will show you how to do it, Stretch it out! Be exercised. Be concerned about the meetings! It is absolutely true that if you put the Lord's interests first in your life He will take care of yours. He is no-one's debtor. He will look after your affairs better than you will be able to do it. Organise your life so that the meetings, the assembly, is the main thing in it! I know you have a house to pay for, the side of wages that we spoke about with Jacob: you have a family, Jacob had a family of boys. And he had a deal with Laban and things are so uncertain for you can never trust a Laban - you might go in on Monday morning and find that you are redundant. The Lord knows, beloved, He is over all. "I praise the, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth." He is in charge of everything. Great as He is not one single sparrow falls to the ground without Him. The hairs of your head are numbered. "My Father knows that ye have need of these things before you ask." We may be inclined to lose ground in our young years because of our lack of putting the Lord's interests first. You might not notice it when you are young, but when you grow a bit older it becomes evident that there is something missing. You can catch up, of course. The Lord is very gracious. But why cut yourself short of blessing by having things in life out of perspective? I just say this because it is so important that every single person who puts their

hands to the loaf and to the cup should have the Lord's interests primarily in their lives. Without fail, He will look after your interests better than you can yourself.

Think of this beautiful description of Christ that Isaiah, the prophet, gives us. Here he is, a humble man. He had been in the synagogue, He has healed a man's hand and going around healing. The Pharisees, like Hades' gates, are here, "But the Pharisees, having gone out, took counsel against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus knowing it, withdrew thence, and great crowds followed him; and he healed them all." How wonderful that is! He is not discriminating. He is not saying, I will heal you, but I will not heal the next one. He healed everybody. That is Jesus, beloved. That is the Lord's Servant. He is available in service for all. And He is the King. I do not know any king who ever served his citizens like this King for He healed everybody. God says, "I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew forth judgment to the nations. He shall not strive or cry out, nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets." He does not advertise Himself. There is nothing like that about Christ. We are so inclined just to bring ourselves forward. We need to learn refinement and we will learn it all from Him, that Christ is to be "everything, and in all", Col 3: 11. He is not striving, He is not crying out. If there is a bruised reed, He will straighten it out, a smoking flax, He will not put it out. He is promoting life. Where there is heat, there is fire; where there is smoke, there is fire. Whatever it is or wherever we are in our souls, beloved, Jesus will come alongside and take us on from that point. And shortly He is going to "bring forth judgment unto victory." That will all happen in the day to come and it will be so apparent, so evident, that "on his name shall the nations hope." The grandeur, the scope of things, the scale of all that is before us in Christianity! It is just awaiting that day when publicly what we enjoy now and what we have proved now will be manifested to the whole universe.

I just want to finish there because it is a question now of who the Lord can claim relationship with. If we follow on this line that we have been speaking about, we will find that we are of His flesh and

of His bones. These persons, the babes, to whom the Father has been revealed and to whom the Father has revealed things, here they are. They are coming out here in relation to the will of God persons who have found rest to their souls who have come to Him, weary and burdened and heavy-laden and He has given them rest. His yoke easy and His burden is light. They have taken His yoke upon them and they have found rest to their souls. And so His natural relatives come and they stand without. Where were they? Why were they not within, why were they not in this circle listening to what He had to say? They are claiming some kinship with Christ, some relation with Christ, but He is disowning them. He says, I am identified with persons who "do the will of my Father who is in the heavens." There came a time in 2 Samuel 5 when all the tribes came to Hebron to make David king, and the elders said, "We are thy bone and thy flesh, v 1. They could identify in themselves what was there in David. Can we do that, beloved? Can we identify in ourselves what the Lord has wrought. Can we identify an entirely new creation? You can look back in your history and you can say, and everybody should be able to say, No, that was the old me. That is not me. This is the true me. You come through Romans 7 and you find yourself, "*I myself*"; and so you stop speaking about yourself. I think the personal pronoun is used maybe forty-some times in Romans 7. In Romans 8 it is hardly used at all. That is teaching and that is practice, but here are persons, here are the babes. He is looking round at the babes and He says, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And, stretching out his hand to his disciples..." - that is the persons who have come and learned from Him and been with Him in the cornfields on the sabbath - and He is saying, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in the heavens, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." We are here on the side of responsibility: there are brothers and sisters and mothers. It is not an 'over-Jordan' position; it is a wilderness position, and the same as 2 Corinthians 6, "and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to me for sons and daughters", v 1. I trust there will be some encouragement for us in what I have said and to acquaint ourselves with coming to Christ. No matter what the problem is, go

to Him, and He will maintain us in life and in buoyancy. Secretly and inwardly, we will find rest to our souls and, consequently, I believe, we will become the more able to handle the various crises that come upon us, that come upon the testimony and come upon us in our own lives and in our own histories and in our own families, for you marvel at the way that Jesus could handle things. What capability He had! and He would impart something of that capability. Think of the capability that Paul had, how he could fall on Eutychus, and embrace him, how he could get the brethren in Corinth to come round to what the truth was, how he could write in view of shutting the door on the enemy as he would seek to come into Colossians with man's mind and man's thinking. God has in mind that we should develop on these lines because we are going to be kings and priests. Revelation 5 says He has "redeemed to God ... and made them to our God kings and priests", v 9,10. Think about it, it is a very wonderful consideration, one day we are going to rule over the earth! We need to allow our souls to rise to the greatness of divine thoughts, made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father", Rev 1: 6, and then it says in Revelation 5 "and made them to our God kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth." You begin to learn that in yourself, you begin to know how to rule in yourself, how to rule and maintain your own spirit. J.T. often quoted the word, better is he "that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city", Prov. 16: 32. I trust the Lord will encourage all our hearts and help us to progress and to mature in these great matters and find they are the joy of our souls. That is our life. Moses says, "Lord, *thou*, hast been our dwelling-place in all generations", Ps. 90: 1. May it be so for His Name's sake.

REDBRIDGE

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