

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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DJH No doubt other scriptures will come to mind as we proceed together, but one is concerned that we might enquire into the activities of the Father. I have been impressed over some time, that Christ is the great Operator in the economy, as we are often reminded, but perhaps, if I may speak for myself, I have not sufficiently taken account of the activities of the Father; and yet each one of us personally has been the subject of the Father's operations. This would surely give us some appreciation of the Father and would give Him a greater place in our affections. I read in John because this is very much John's line. In John's gospel the Lord Jesus is so much concerned in His ministry with making the Father known. We have here in this chapter, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me". This is referred to also in chapter 17. It is wonderful that each one of us should have been given by the Father to Jesus. And then again, later, "No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him". Each one of us has been the subject of the Father's drawing to Jesus. Then, "Everyone that has heard from the Father himself, and has learned of him, comes to me". I just felt that we could speak together as to our experience in relation to these things.

In Matthew we have the reference to the Father being well pleased to reveal these things to babes. In our simplicity, we have been affected by the Father's pleasure in revealing things to us. I am reminded that in John's epistle he says to the little children that they have "known the Father", 1 John 2: 13. It is not exactly something that is advanced in our spiritual experience, but, as little children, we have known the Father. Then how wonderful that the revelation to Peter came from the Father, the Father had revealed it. I just wondered whether we could dwell on that side of that scripture. Perhaps we do not touch that side so much, the personal interest of the Father in revealing it, and, as it were, laying the foundation on which the Lord Jesus could say "I will build my assembly". Colossians brings us in collectively, "translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love", we are made fit, and Ephesians goes right on, the Father strengthening us, the Spirit

involved, showing how He is available, we might say reverently and carefully, under the Father's hand in view of strengthening the saints, just as the Lord Jesus is available to the Father in making Himself known. I wondered if we could speak of these things together.

JCG It is very helpful. What you are saying brings before us the side of affection, which the name 'Father' brings to us in Christianity, but also the fact that we are derived from the One who is supreme in that economy in which God has made Himself known. Please help us more as to this matter that you started with, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me". It is very elevating to consider who the Father is. Is that what is in your mind?

DJH Yes. It is wonderful that in His sovereignty the Father would take account of persons such as we are, as Matthew 11 refers to as babes. You might say there is nothing in us that is outstanding. He has revealed these things to babes, but He would give such persons to Christ, "All that the Father gives me". The note says 'whatever', so it is very wide. "All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will not at all cast out". That is how the Lord Jesus values those that the Father gives to Him: "I will not at all cast out". Could you say more as to it? It is a wonderful thing to think about. It is just affecting me. I trust it may leave a fresh impression with us, that such a One, the Father, supreme, as we often say, in this wonderful economy in which God is known to us, that He should take account of us, each one of us, and give us to Christ. As the hymn says,

Thou gav'st us, Father, in Thy love,
To Christ to bring us home to Thee,
Suited to Thine own thoughts above,
As sons like Him, with Him to be (Hymn 88).

JCG Yes, that is helpful. The reference to the Father giving, and then "No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him", brings out the supremacy of that Person, but it is in view of being attached to Christ eventually, the Father being the source. I think it is all very helpful for us.

DJH I am glad you bring in that touch as to drawing to Christ because I think we can see that in each of these references in which the Father is presented as active, Christ is in view. I think we can see that in each setting. The great point with the Father is that Christ might be magnified and brought before us in different ways as we go through. It

is wonderful to see the way that that is so, no doubt bearing on the fact that the only references in the scriptures to sonship in relation to the Father, as far as I am aware, are in relation to Christ, as John says in his epistle, "the Son of the Father", 2 John 1:3. It gives us some impression of what Christ is to the Father in that relationship as the "only-begotten" and therefore in all His activities He has that Person before Him.

DAS I was thinking of what the Lord says Himself, that "my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) and also that "My Father ... is greater than all", John 10:29. It says earlier too, "I am come in my Father's name", John 5: 43. It shows what His relation was with His Father, do you think?

DJH Yes. He says later, "He that has seen me has seen the Father", John 14:9. This brings out Their oneness. The Lord Jesus says to the Father, "as we are one" (John 17:22), and yet operating distinctively, the Father operating and acting distinctively in the scriptures we have read, and yet having Christ in view. It is good as you say to be reminded that the Lord said, "My Father ... is greater than all". When He refers to "my Father", He is speaking distinctly as to the relationship into which He has come as man. But in John 10, where the Lord says "My Father ... is greater than all", He adds "I and the Father are one" (v 30), which relates to their place together in deity.

JAG The Father is operating here from the point of view of His purpose and counsel. It is very blessed to see that in this great system of affection the Father's love is drawing persons to Christ, whom He loves.

DJH It is wonderful, and how far back it goes! We have the reference to "he has chosen us in him before the world's foundation", Eph 1:4. The "in him" shows that His coming into manhood was ever in mind. That peculiar place that He has as man and in view of what He has effected for the Father's affections, would come out in "on this account the Father loves me", John 10:17.

JTB Do you think the prominence of the Father is what makes John's gospel so attractive? It begins with "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him" (John 1:18), and it finishes with "my Father and your Father, ... my God and your God", John 20:17. These things are wonderful to contemplate, are they not?

DJH Yes. I was thinking that it gives us an impression that in the economy in which God is known to us, the Father is the source of all, it all flows from Him, "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him". Then as to the Spirit coming, it says, He "goes forth from with the Father", John 15: 26. Everything comes from the Father. I have felt that we do not sufficiently recognise the place the Father has in the wonder of divine operations.

RG. I was wondering if these operations of divine love in the Father had in view that there might be a company of persons who could take their place alongside Christ and say "Abba, Father" (see Rom 8:14; Gal 4:6). The fulness of our intimate knowledge of and relationship with the Father which enables us to say that comes from the operations of the Father in the way that they are set out here, do you think?

DJH Just so, so that He has "sent out the Spirit of His Son" crying "Abba, Father" (see Gal 4: 6). It shows the wonder of the way in which God is known to us in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit, and the wonderful relationship into which Christ came in order to effect the purpose of God according to His counsels. It is wonderful that it means so much to the Father that He is going to be surrounded by many sons. He has "taken us into favour in the Beloved", Eph 1: 6. We are taken on by adoption.

JDG There is absolute certainty in what the Father does. It says in verse 37, "All that the Father gives me shall come to me". There is no uncertainty about that.

DJH That is good. What makes it so certain?

JDG There must be a divine operation that causes a person to move to Christ.

DJH That is what I was thinking as to everything coming from the Father. We could say in one sense, and rightly so, that everything in us begins with new birth, that is, the operation of the Spirit. But then here the Lord says that all that the Father gives to Him would come to Him. That means that you cannot exactly separate the operations of divine Persons. You can make certain distinctions: we can speak of new birth as the operation of the Spirit; we can speak of the work of Christ, of course, as it says in the scripture that we read in Ephesians, "in whom we have redemption" (ch 1: 7); but then there is the Father, would it be right to say, behind it all?

JDG I was thinking that. It is going to be complete right from the beginning from the Father's point of view. But the answer comes in persons who move to Christ.

WL In Matthew the Lord personally says "Come to me". I wonder if you could say something about, "no one can come to me unless it be given to him from the Father", John 6:65? Does that show the co-ordination between divine Persons? You spoke earlier of attraction. That is a principle, is it not? We have been taught too that the children of Israel were chased out of Egypt but they crossed over Jordan on the principle of attraction. Would that be involved?

DJH Yes. I am thankful for that because it all emphasises what we are saying that you cannot exactly separate these things. We come to Christ; well, why do we come to Him? It is really, as you say, on the principle of attraction; but then the Father, by the Spirit who has come from with the Father, and who knows so perfectly the blessedness of the affections that there are between the Father and the Son, would make the Son attractive to us so that we would be drawn to Him. Is that what you are thinking?

JS The Father has found an adequate Object for his affections in Christ in manhood. Do you think that in drawing us to Christ He wants Christ to fill *our* affections?

DJH Yes, it is good to put it that way. His affections are fully satisfied in Christ in that respect. But I believe Mr Lyon said that "bring the fatted calf" (Luke 15: 23) shows that He delights to share Christ with us. Christ is so much to Him that He would have us to give Him that place in our hearts and, as it were, share His delight in that blessed One.

JS It is a wonderful privilege for men to be drawn by the Father, to share something of His appreciation of Christ.

DJH We can speak of these scriptures together, and that in a way would be "that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts", do you think?

GCMcK Would the Father sending Christ be a great matter in His operations? I notice in verse 44 the Lord says, "No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him". There is both the sending of Christ and the drawing to Christ. I was thinking of the way that divine Persons are operating, especially the Father, all the affection and the thoughts that entered into the sending of Christ, and then how

attractive He is as the sent One.

DJH We cannot separate from this the operations of the Spirit, can we? "All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will not at all cast out". We come to Him as drawn to Him, but that would be as the Spirit has operated in us to bring about that attractiveness. As to what is natural, it says "there is no beauty that we should desire him" (Isa 53:2) but the Holy Spirit has come from with the Father and He would make Christ attractive to us so that we would come to Him. I wondered whether there was something of that in mind in Matthew 11, in the way that He invites us to come to Him. It is in that setting of His own blessed personal relations with the Father: "At that time, Jesus answering said, 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". He goes on to say "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened". This really goes beyond what is providential, does it not? We speak of and know the Father in a providential way but there is something on a higher level than that that I wondered if we might get help as to. It is those who are labouring and burdened as Christ was in relation to the testimony here that He invites to come to Him. While we are glad to apply it as we have our burdens physically lifted, it really relates to our part here in the testimony, does it not?

GCMcK When He says "Come to me, all ye who labour and are burdened", He adds "and I will give you rest". I understand that that involves the disclosure of the Father to us, so that we might know something of the Father. He is the One who reveals the Father.

DJH I thought that was the setting of it really. He found His rest in the Father's love and in His knowledge of the Father; and He would invite us to the Father. The Father has drawn us to Him, but you can see the wonderful mutuality of operation between the Father and the Son.

CKR Can you say a word on revelation? It says that the Father has "revealed" these things to babes. And again revelation comes into Matthew 16. It is obviously the Father's sovereign operation, but directed specifically to certain objects of that activity.

DJH I wondered whether we might get help as to that together. I felt in chapter 16 particularly there is a specific revelation: "*Thou* art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed

it to thee, but my Father who is in the heavens". I was thinking of the way in which the Lord Jesus would take such delight in the fact of the Father revealing this matter, and thus, would it be right to say, providing a basis on which there would be this great matter which is the focal point of this period in which we are, the assembly; that it should be built, as He says, on this rock, that is, the confession of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God": "on this rock I will build my assembly". Think of what that means to Christ, as we have often been reminded, that He could say "my assembly". What it must have meant to Him that there should be this revelation in view of the establishment of that immutable basis on which He was going to work in relation to the glory of that vessel which would be His counterpart.

CKR The Lord seems to be in the secret of the Father's operations in revelation. In Matthew 11, He says that the Father has revealed them to babes, and in chapter 16 He says that the Father has revealed it to Peter. It is as though there is a beautiful harmony, as ever, between the Father and the Son, but the Father's operations are specific, are they not, regarding individuals?

DJH Exactly. It really comes back to "I and the Father are one". Yet there is a distinction. I remember Mr McCallum used the expression once 'the indivisibility of the Godhead'. He said, 'we cannot separate but we can distinguish'. That is really what we are saying, that there is a certain distinction in operation, is there not? But then They are one in Their operations.

WL Why does the Lord say here in Matthew 11, "No one knows the Son but the Father" when He is revealed to Peter in chapter 16? This is an absolute statement also.

DJH This would relate to the place that He has in Godhead, would it not, as a divine Person? There is that which is beyond us to penetrate, and would make us, even in our conversation as we are together now, take our shoes from off our feet because we are really on holy ground. It is good to be reminded of that.

WL In Ephesians 4, it says "until we all arrive at the knowledge of the Son of God", v 13. That would be the Lord known in manhood. It does not refer to His deity exactly, does it?

DJH No. Here in Matthew 11 it is "the Son". It does not say 'No one knows the Son of God'; but "No one knows the Son". It is the only way

we can identify Him, as it were, although we could not say that He was in that relationship as in that place before the incarnation.

JDG Does the Father reveal where there is a receptive state in the persons, the babes? There must be a receptive state there. There was not such a state with the wise and prudent but there was with the babes.

DJH Yes, it is good to be reminded of the receptive state that there is with the babes. It is similar to the way we have been helped in what Peter says, "as newborn babes desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word", 1 Pet 2:2. It is just that receptiveness there. It is the same idea. It is not exactly babes in growth, but however far on we are in the pathway, we are to be in that way receptive, as newborn babes, desiring earnestly. As has been said, a babe will not be satisfied until it gets its milk, and so it is "the pure mental milk of the word". I think it is good what you say to remind us of why it refers to them as babes here.

JDG Divine operations are particular.

DJH We were saying that coming along in conversation, that there is nothing arbitrary about divine operations; they are particular.

RG Revelation is private and individual. Declaration is public and universal. For revelation, there has to be a state within the person, and that is a private and individual matter, in which the Lord finds infinite delight and in which the Father finds pleasure also.

DJH That is something I feel for myself I need to get hold of, that for each one of us, it is intensely individual. We cannot compass the greatness of the Father, who He is as to His Person, "Lord of the heaven and of the earth", and yet He has revealed things to babes. You could not think of a greater contrast between One who is the "Lord of the heaven and of the earth" and a babe. Yet this is intensely individual. Do I really believe that such a glorious Person should be interested in me? It comes back to that.

RG "For the Father himself has affection for you, because ye have had affection for me", John 16:27. There you get it in a nutshell, do you not?

DJH That is right, and that bears on what our brother said too, that divine Persons are specific in their operations.

JAG Coming to Christ would prove reality in persons, and is that how we learn sonship and the liberty and glory of it for the Father's pleasure,

so that we are ready for revelation?

DJH Yes. So in that sense, would it be right to say that we continue to receive revelation? There is what is basic, but then there is what is coming all the time.

JAG The Lord says in John 6 that He was here to do the will of Him that sent Him (v 38). He is the Man of God's purpose and He is opening up to us in this gospel the greatness and glory of divine purpose, and what sonship is in Himself personally, and the liberty that He has is to be known by us, and that liberty and joy and relationship is to be appreciated.

DJH I think what is coming out is making things clearer to me. All this has in view the place that Christ should have in our affections.

JAB Could you say a little more about the line that has come in in these last few remarks? It would be a good thing if, as a result of our conversation, we were to realise that the Father is working. Is it your impression that we need to be conscious in ourselves of His operations because the Father's name is a name of relationship, is it not?

DJH Yes. It is a Name of relationship, but how much do I appreciate that? This was really what lay behind my exercise in bringing these scriptures forward, that we might realise that this is intensely personal. What a result it would have with us if we were really to appreciate that such a One as the Father has had to do with us individually. Although He is interested in all in one sense - it says there is "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all" (Eph 4:6), which is beyond me to explain - He has taken up each one, and there are thousands out there that He has not taken up in the same way. Well, why has He taken me up? All this should affect us.

JAB That is what I feel and the need to understand that the Father is operating in this reading in relation to each one of us here this afternoon. We have come here because we are interested, to some extent or another, in what is going to come before us; but then we must see beyond that, that the Father is actually operating this afternoon. It is not at some other time or some other place in relation to something else, but *towards us*, now. That is a very precious thing to get into our hearts.

DJH I am thankful for what you say because this is something I have felt for a long time for myself, that I do not appreciate enough the

operation of the Father at such a time as this, as having an interest in the company, but having an interest in each one. These are great things.

JCG It is a very interesting enquiry. I was thinking further that in the scripture in Matthew 11, the revelation to the babes brings out the Father's pleasure, His delight. It says, "for thus has it been well-pleasing in thy sight". In John 6 the references to giving and drawing are related to the will of the Father, but here there is some result that seems to bring out the Father's pleasure. That would surely be something that we should enter into with Christ, and enjoy, do you think?

DJH The two are brought together again in Ephesians 1: "the good pleasure of his will", v 5. It all enters into His pleasure; the exercise of His will enters into His pleasure. "Pleased to reveal him", it says.

JCG It brings out the delight that the Father sees in giving things and drawing persons; it also says we have heard from the Father, and now this result in the babes to whom it has been revealed seems to draw out particularly the Father's pleasure. There is no doubt that the Lord and the Spirit would also have pleasure in this, but the Lord is drawing particular attention to the Father's pleasure.

DJH Yes. It is wonderful that the Lord draws attention to the Father's pleasure, and the Father draws attention to Christ, and behind it all is the operation of the Holy Spirit.

WL How would Ephesians 1:17 apply? Paul prays "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him"? Could you comment on that?

DJH I wish someone else would. It is a scripture I have often thought about. To my mind it simply conveys that there is no reserve in the mind and heart of God. In one sense, we will never arrive at the full knowledge of God because He is beyond us, "dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see", 1 Tim 6:16. But all I can say as to my own impression is that it is to indicate that, as it says elsewhere in scripture, He will withhold no good thing from those that love Him - "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly", Ps 84:11. It shows the unreserved character of the way in which God has come out.

WL It gives us an appetite to enter into this "full knowledge of him". Where can we find that? It is a big challenge. You will only find it where divine Persons are active. You would not find it in the world or the systems of the world, however religious they might be. Paul's prayers were to that end, do you think?

DJH We are encouraged to feel after these things. We never come to the limit. We know that the limit is there, but we never reach the limit.

GBG If the Father is operating sovereignly, can He do just as He pleases? If He is operating on the basis of His sovereignty, as He has done, He does as He pleases, does He not? Therefore there is no limit to the height of blessing that He bestows upon us, is there?

DJH That is right. There is no limit on His side. The question is on our side, as to our receptiveness. We have referred to the babes. It is a question of the receptiveness on our side.

GBG What I was meaning as well was that He has not given us an earthly portion. He has given us a heavenly one. That is obviously from His side. We could not give ourselves a heavenly portion, could we? And in itself that draws out our affections towards Him, does it not?

DJH Surely. Other scriptures come to mind. "Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ", Eph 1:3. Can you tell me what they are? It is so full, what has come to us in that way. Is that something of what you have in mind?

DCB The Son and the Spirit have descended. The Father has never descended, but He works. Could you say something about that?

DJH I wondered whether perhaps we could look on to Ephesians 3 in that regard. Paul is bowing his knees there to the Father "of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named, in order that he may give you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man". Here the Father is giving us to be strengthened, but it is by His Spirit. I wondered whether that applies to these other matters also, that in what the Father is doing, He remains as He is, not having descended, as you say, but behind it all is the operation of the Spirit. We have been saying that the Father and the Son cannot be separated, and that is so of the Spirit also. It is really God who is operating, but we see certain distinctions as to whether it is the Father, the Son or the Spirit. Do you think that would be?

DCB So that really the blessings are elevated to the Father's sphere, which the Father has remained in.

DJH Yes, that is another impression that I was hoping would come forward. I am glad you say that. All this line of things elevates things. We were saying elsewhere that the same thing applies in relation to the truth of the body. We think much of the truth of the body in the Corinthian setting of it, that is in our relations together in sympathy, "And if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (1 Cor 12: 26); but then there is the Ephesian level in which it is building itself up and every member working in that regard (see Eph 4 v 16). I think the same applies in relation to the Father. That was really my exercise in reading these scriptures. There is what is providential and the Father in relation to our circumstances here, but I am glad of what you say because that was really what I was hoping might come forward, that this is beyond that; this is beyond what is providential; this is lifting everything up to that level to which you refer. Is that what you are thinking?

DCB So He is even presented here as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". In chapter 1 it is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory", v 17. So there is the distinctiveness of the Father, yet He is the One who is being addressed in these prayers.

RT Is it all a love matter? You say it is not providential, but it is love, is it not?

Father, Thy love, the source of all,
Sweeter than all it gives (hymn 26).

DJH Thou gav'st us, Father, in Thy love,
To Christ ... (hymn 88).

Father, Thine own unbounded love
Has reached us through Thy Son... (hymn 94).

Suited to Thine own thoughts above... (hymn 88).

It is all a love matter. Say more as to that. I am glad you mention that.

RT So that it brings new feelings into our hearts, does it not, of sentiment and all these things? The Father would impart His own feelings to us, would He not, His own nature as well?

DJH I was thinking that when you referred to His own nature. It is really the way in which the nature of God has come into expression

towards us, but with a view to an answer in us towards Himself.

JCG The reference to the families is therefore important, is it not? In Matthew 11 the Lord is showing the supremacy of the Father, "Lord of the heaven and of the earth", but here there are relationships of love coming to light between the Father and the families. The families would suggest that, do you think, that there is a responsive answer in the heavens and on earth, showing that the supremacy is maintained but it is in families in love, is it not?

DJH Yes, it is a wonderful expression. The note to it says, 'There is a distinct connection between the Greek words for Father and family'. It is what you say: it is wonderful the way in which it will be extended. At the present time this unique family, because indwelt by the Spirit of His Son, is being formed, the assembly, but every family will have some touch, some impression, some experience of the Father's love.

WL Would "to be strengthened with power by his Spirit in the inner man" be an assembly matter? I think this passage brings out the uniqueness of the assembly, "the inner man". I doubt if you could use this as to any other family, do you think? It just brings out the uniqueness of the assembly in the divine mind. Wonderful thought! And it is not 'the Spirit' but "his Spirit", the Spirit of the Father.

DJH It is wonderful the way the Holy Spirit has come in in that way. He goes forth from with the Father. That would be His Spirit.

JAG Can you say something about "the riches of his [the Father's] glory"? It is what strengthens us. That is the level of the strengthening.

DJH I could not say anything as to it but it is a thing that has affected me, and it is the level on which the Father operates, and in which the apostle always had Him before him. Even providentially he said, "But my God shall abundantly supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus", Phil 4: 19. It is not according to what you think you need, but these are wonderful expressions, are they not? The divine wealth that is available under the Father's hand, whether it be in view of the assembly or whether it even be as to our needs providentially, the wealth is limitless. Is that in your mind?

JAG Yes, "that the Christ may dwell, through faith, in your hearts". We have that outlook on the whole universe, you might say. "The riches of his glory" is a wonderful statement.

JAB Is that rather summed up in the phrase in chapter 1, "taken us into favour in the Beloved", v 6. The note there to "favour" is 'grace and favour' and all that that implies. It is a very rich and full thought, is it not? It is the Father that has done that.

DJH So it relates to the love which the Father has for Christ.

JSp Would "the inner man" involve that we have capacity to enter into these things? I was thinking that the initial operations of God lead to this in new birth. It leads us into developing in capacity and the divine nature to enter into these great eternal thoughts of God.

DJH It is good to think of that because again we need to realise there are things which may be obvious, and much of what we have said is here in the scriptures. If it is not in the scriptures, let us forget it! When we really start to think about these things and the reality of them, do I realise that there is something in me and something in you and something in each one of us which is only there because of divine operation? This "inner man", there is something there which is real and it is going through. I may fail. Please God that I shall not, but if I fail, nevertheless there is that there which is indestructible. Is that really what you are thinking that there is something very real in each one? As I say, these are simple things in a way - I am not able for much - but we need to realise the reality of things which perhaps we speak of quite freely together, but how real are these things to us?

JSp Well, I am just impressed as the reading is proceeding with the greatness of this dispensation, that when the fulness of things is really brought out, this dispensation is really the greatest of all dispensations. We have capacity to enter into the great eternal thoughts of God. Is that right?

DJH Yes, thinking of that, I often wonder what they were saying. It says at the beginning of Acts they heard them speaking "the great things of God", chap. 2: 11. You say this is a day of small things, but it is not in that respect. "The great things of God" are not small and they never will be, and they have not diminished, have they? Perhaps that is what we are speaking about, "the great things of God".

GCMcK So there is a glory attached to this in a special way, the Father's operations. We alluded to "the riches of his glory": He is the Father of glory. We get the glory of His grace. So is there a special elevation in glory attaching to the Father's operations?

DJH It is amazing, is it not? Say more because it certainly is an expression, "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory", chap. 1: 17. It seems as though all glory in a sense has its source in Himself. Is it right to say that?

GCMcK And I thought, therefore, it would enter into His operations and there is a touch of glory in His grace, for example. I wondered if it would just enter into the whole matter, what the Father is in Himself as the Father of glory.

DJH Surely it would.

JAG It certainly entered into the raising of Christ "by the glory of the Father", Rom 6: 4.

DJH Wonderful that! Glory is a word which has a different meaning in the spiritual vocabulary to what it has in the world. I have often thought of that reference - we might just touch on Colossians. Before what we read, it speaks of "strengthened with all power according to the might of his glory", v 11. It was the "might of his glory" that raised Christ from the dead, but then what Paul says in that prayer is that it is towards you who believe. Do I believe that?

RG I was just going to link it back to what was said about love because His glory is the power of His love. "Raised ... by the glory of the Father" was raised by the power of His love, and if He is the Father of glory we see the greatness and the extensiveness of His love, operating powerfully towards securing something in the assembly that will be for Himself, do you think?

DJH Surely, so that would be why it has been said that love is the greatest power in the universe. You could think of no greater power, not only that it raised Christ from the dead, but the way it is expressed, "in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead", Eph 1: 20. It is a tremendous expression of power. I have often said as to that that it seems almost as though the apostle runs out of words, "the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ". You cannot get beyond that, can you? But it is good, as you say, as to the power of His love.

RT It is very comforting that when the Father moves, everything else has to give way. Even Christ says the Father has reserved certain things for His own authority, even governmentally and so on. The Father is over all these things, is He not? And He has operated in our

hearts to bring all His purposes to fruition.

DJH Amazing, is it not? Well, let us make way for Him! Do you think we make way for Him in that way?

RT These scriptures would encourage us. He has power; He has strength; and everything else has to give way.

DJH And He has love - well, I would not say, He has love: He is love. It is His very nature. Well, I just wondered whether something could be said as to Colossians, "giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins".

TCM I was going to ask about this matter of "giving thanks to the Father". Should this be a constant attitude of our hearts towards the Father because of the completeness of what He has done? He has "made us fit" and "delivered us" and "translated us". It is a complete matter as has already been mentioned.

DJH I think that is good that it is a constant matter. It is not just that we acquiesce to the fact that the Father has done it, as it were, but we should never cease to be thankful for the place into which we have been brought, and then to recognise the glory of the Person who has effected it. But I would like to understand this. How has He made us fit? When did He do that?

JCG It would have its origin in the death of Christ, would it not? We had to be fit morally before we could answer spiritually. Do you think that this matter of giving thanks to the Father, while it is general and would help us in our individual and family exercises, it would help in elevating the prayer meeting particularly in relation to our prayers at the golden altar. It would bear on that, would it not?

DJH I think it would. Do you have the prayer meeting here announced as a meeting for prayer and thanksgiving? I suppose this is the level of the thanksgivings. Is that what you were thinking?

JCG Exactly.

DJH There is much that we can be thankful for. As I say, we so much limit ourselves to the providential side of things, even in the prayer meeting, do we not? Perhaps you do not here, but we do in other places, but I think what you say would help. It is more the side of golden

altar prayers and thanksgivings. Would that be right to say?

JCG There has been a general exercise that our prayers should be elevated. There is need to be concerned about, and other local exercises and so on, and illnesses; but we should be concerned as to what is for the Father as well. It is in the context here of being "strengthened with all power according to the might of his glory unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy", so quite clearly it is in a testimonial setting.

RG Do you think that, if the woman in John 4 read these verses in the epistle to Colossians, she would think, 'Oh, yes "the Father seeks such as his worshippers" (John 4: 23) and here I am in this verse: "who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love"'? What do you think?

DJH That is very good. I think we can learn a lot in relation to that chapter, but I am glad you touched on that point too because that is really the great end in view that in all these operations we are speaking of, the Father is seeking worshippers. There should be an answer in love to Himself in relation to all He has secured at such cost to Himself.

JAG Does all this relate to the Father's name: "I will declare thy name to my brethren", Heb 2: 12? It seems to me to be very expansive and consequently the answer is, "in the midst of the assembly will I sing thy praises", Heb 2: 12. It is an exceptionally happy and joyful matter.

DJH "And will make it known", John 6: 26.

Grangemouth

31 March 2007

Key to Initials:

D C Brown, Edinburgh; J A Brown, Grangemouth; J T Brown, Grangemouth; G B Grant, Dundee; J A Gardiner, Aberdeen; J C Gray, Grangemouth; J D Gray, Edinburgh; R Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; D J Hutson, London; W Lamont, Cumnock; G C McKay, Glasgow; T C Munro, Grangemouth; C K Robinson, Glasgow; D A Steven, Grangemouth; J Strachan, Dundee; J Spinks, Grangemouth; R Taylor, Kirkcaldy

THE EFFECT OF THE FATHER'S LOVE

D J Hutson

John 17: 6 - 17

1 John 3: 1 - 3; 2: 14 (second sentence) - 17

Luke 15: 15 - 23

I desire, with the Lord's help and, I trust, by the Spirit, to continue what we have had before us in the reading and to speak of the way in which what we have had as to the Father's love may affect us in our practical life here. There is that which is wonderfully before us in relation to our portion in glory, which is touched upon in the scripture that I read in John's epistle, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is". It is wonderful that John was so full of Christ that he does not actually mention Him by name in that chapter. Indeed, elsewhere also we find that John does not actually mention the Lord Jesus by name, but we know of whom he is speaking, he is so full of Him. Is that how we are in relation to the One who has loved us and given Himself for us? Is He really to us our life? And is our life really with Him above? "Your life is hid with the Christ in God", Col 3: 3. How great these things are! One cannot explain them or expand on them to any degree, but simply let us ponder the words of scripture. "When the Christ is manifested who is our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory", Col 3: 4. Does it not attract our hearts? How glorious He is, and He is concerned about us at the present time!

Before He went to where He is, He committed us to the Father. That is why I read in John 17. This wonderful - is it right to say? - mutuality of which we were speaking earlier comes in again here: "They were thine, and thou gavest them me" and yet they did not cease to be the Father's as He says, "concerning those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine, (and all that is mine is thine, and all that is thine mine,) and I am glorified in them". How wonderful it is that He commits them then to the Father, "And I am no longer in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one as we". Among other things - and others could say more as to what that would mean - it would be that we are one in affection, one in affection for the Father, one in the enjoyment of the Father's love. What wonderful things these are: "that they may be one as we"! And then He says that He kept them: "When I was with them I kept them in thy name" and how He preserved them!

“And now I come to thee. And these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them”. What a joy it was, His relationships with the Father! We read in Matthew 11 but if we had read the corresponding scripture in Luke, it says there, “In the same hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said, I praise thee Father”, chap. 10: 21. What a joy He had in His relationships with the Father! What a joy He had in the Father's love! How wonderful! And 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”. He says it again later, “They are not of the world, as I am not of the world“, v 16.

There is something which I felt needs to be laid upon us that we are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. There is no question in our minds as to Christ that He is not of the world, but as we shall see in the other scripture I read in John's epistle, that there are two matters which are mutually exclusive, we may say, completely incompatible: one is the love of the world and the other is the love of the Father. But the Lord Jesus emphasises here, “They are not of the world”. Beloved brother and sister, younger brethren, older brethren, *we are not of the world*. There is that in you and in me, God's sovereign work, His operations of which we were speaking in the reading, which has no connection whatsoever with the world morally. We are in the world, as the Lord Jesus says; they are in the world, but we are no more of the world than He is, and I believe that is something we need to hold to, beloved. And if we are to be in the full enjoyment of the Father's love, if we are to have Christ's joy in His enjoyment of the Father's love without reserve, it is to be as we are true to that which is in us which is not of the world. The Holy Spirit does not relate Himself in any way to that which is of the world. What He relates Himself to is that which is not of the world, and there is that in you and that in me which is not of the world, but is of the Father, the fruit of those operations of which we have been speaking. How full that subject is, as we have found, and so much more in it to be explored than we could speak of together! I trust it may lead us to some contemplation and private enquiry into this great matter of the Father's operations in view of Christ having His place with us. But there is that there which is not of the world, and that is what is to be given place to. And the Holy Spirit (who is ever faithful to Christ and who has come from with the Father) would ever help us as we seek to make way for that in us which is not of the world: that is, the work of God in its indestructible character which is going through for the Father's pleasure into eternity.

And so I read in John's epistle: "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God". It is not the children of the Father or the sons of the Father, but the children of God. I believe it would relate to our position here in testimony in the world, that we are called the children of God, brought into the divine family. We were speaking about the families, and the Father of every family, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named", Eph 3: 15, and we have been brought into this wonderful family at the present time, and the Father's love is behind it: "See what love the Father has given to us". We were speaking also of what the Father has given, what finds its source in the Father's love and here he says, "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God".

Then it says, "For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew him not". As I say, here he is referring to what follows in relation to Christ. It knew Him not. There was nothing here which was in any way suited to Him in the world around. He could say as to Himself, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world" and yet He was here in the world but "now", as he says in chapter 17, "I come to thee". But here John says, "For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew him not". How evident that is that the world knew Him not!

Man the cross to Him awarded,
Man the Saviour crucified' (Hymn 404).

That was how He was regarded in the world here: the world knew Him not. Consider the wonder of it - see how the Lord Jesus Himself could say as to that son who was sent into the vineyard, "perhaps when they see him they will respect him", Luke 20: 13. And again it speaks of the way in which He was rejected here: "which none of the princes of this age knew, (for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory)", 1 Cor 2: 8. But they knew not and the world knew Him not. There is something in the believer, if we are true to it, as I have been saying, which means that the world will not know us. Do we find our associations, our friendships, in any way in the world? Thank God there is what is in His care for us. He makes a way through for us, and we are able to go through as living here "providing things honest before all men" (Rom 12: 17), but nevertheless not as of the world. The way in which we touch things here is different from the way in which those who are of the world will touch things. We have instructions in the epistles as to the various relationships in which we may be found, whether it be

children or husbands or wives or masters or servants. All these things are governed by the fact that we are not of the world, and there is that in us which is to find its expression as we are left here in testimony.

But now what a hope is before us! “Beloved, now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”. What a hope! What a hope! “We shall see him”, that blessed, glorious Saviour who gave Himself for us, who loved us and gave Himself for us. He has given so much to secure us. What a Saviour He is! And we shall be like Him! What joy the Father will have then when He is surrounded by the many sons, not then, in that sense, as spoken of here, as “children of God”, but sons of God; and yet that is our position now as it says, “God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus”, Gal 3: 26. That is by faith in that blessed Man who is there, because that is where our place is, “raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”, Eph 2: 6. How wonderful these things are, beloved, but “we shall be like him”. Then sonship in actuality in all its fulness will be seen in those who at the present time are not of the world.

And then it says, “And every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as *he* is pure”. So what we have been speaking of is to have what we speak of as a moral effect upon us. It is not just to be something that we can enjoy (whether personally or together) as facts - and they are glorious facts, glorious realities! That came into the reading, that these things are *real* at the present time. They are blessed and glorious realities, all established through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, through His death, burial, resurrection and glory, and the presence here of the Holy Spirit; glorious realities, which relate to us each one as not of the world. But then these are to have a moral effect upon us. So it says, “And every one that has this hope in him”, not 'should purify himself', but “purifies himself”. Now, that is a question, beloved, as to how much this hope is in us. How much does the Holy Spirit quicken in us in such a way that our affections become uncluttered with what is of the world, so that we almost automatically purify ourselves? Because everything here around us which is of the world is completely incompatible with the glory of this blessed hope which is before us, when we shall see Him and be like Him forever? And so he says, “And every one that has this hope in him”. Is this hope in you, dear brother? Is this hope in you, dear sister? Is it really alive?

He has “begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”, 1 Peter 1: 3. Is that hope so living in you that you are purifying yourself and keeping yourself apart from all that is completely incompatible with it, all that is of the world and not of the Father?

So I read in chapter 2 because it shows the danger. These are not the little children that are being addressed here. He says, “I write to you, little children, because ye have known the Father”. It is taken for granted that they knew the Father if they were young men or if they were fathers. Indeed of the fathers it says, “ye have known him that is from the beginning”, but in any case here is the word to these young men, that they have overcome the wicked one: “I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one”. Earlier he says, “I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one”, v 13. You might say, well, they would be all right. They would be safe. But then they are in the world and the Lord Jesus has committed them, as He says also in chapter 17 of the gospel, “And I do not demand for these only, but also for those who believe on me through their word” (v 20), and we are among them, and we may have overcome the wicked one in that sense. We may have overcome in relation to what the enemy would do in relation to spoiling what is of God in us, but even so, he says, “Love not the world”. “If any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”. So it shows, beloved, the danger, but the answer to it is not being occupied with those things and saying we have to judge this and we have to judge that, but the answer to it is the enjoyment of the love of the Father. It is what we have been speaking of, and I trust what we have had together in the reading may help us all in the love of the Father, the recognition of the love which the Father has for us, that there might be a fuller answer in us to that love. Then all these other things will find their own place. We shall reject them because there is no room for them in relation to the love of the Father with which they are completely incompatible. How much do I enjoy the love of the Father?

I read in Luke 15 because the Lord Jesus brought in these homely illustrations that help us as to the truth. Here is a young man who had really indulged himself in the things of the world, but he came to realise that there was nothing in them, and he found that there was an area where there was much that would be for his satisfaction and he

got back to it. And the first thing that affected him when he came back was in the terms of what we have been speaking of, the love of the Father. That is what affected him, and what the Father provided for him: "Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it". Oh, dear brother and sister, just think of what we have been clothed in at the present time as children of God, but awaiting His glorious manifestation when we shall be like Him, the redemption of the body. These are the hopes that we have been speaking of, that the scripture speaks of, "every one that has this hope in him". What wonderful things these are that we have from the Father, and all related to that glorious Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, clothed with the best robe. So what does He see when He looks upon us? He sees that which is not of the world; He sees Christ. How wonderful! That is the way the father would look upon the son. And then the ring on his hand, eternal love, love known now in these present circumstances in which we are, but to be known and enjoyed eternally, that My joy may be in them. How wonderful! And then he says, "sandals on his feet", the liberty of the house! This young man was brought into great things! And then he says, "bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry". What an appreciation this young man would have of the fatted calf! It is what Christ was to the Father, what He *is* to the Father, His appreciation of Christ, and all that He has effected for Him. How wonderful these blessed and holy relationships, and how wonderful that he would share them with this one who had come back, and with you and me, who had no right to anything ourselves, yet are brought in to share Christ with the Father. How wonderful that is! What food for us, that we might feed upon Him and all that He is to the Father, not only feeding on Him as we need Him here, the manna, as we go through the wilderness -

'Christ, once humbled here' (hymn 79),

- but feeding upon Him, the old corn of the land, the One who is indigenous to heaven; and all that He is to the Father, and we can feed upon Him and the Father would share Him with us. How wonderful! "And let us eat and make merry", nothing to interfere, but going forward in this, as has often been said, there is no suggestion that this rejoicing ever came to an end and it never will, beloved. The Father's delight in Christ will never come to an end and we are to share in it.

And then the simple question comes: do you think this young man would ever have gone back to "the husks which the swine were eating", v 16? It is a question for us. We are brought into these

wonderful things. Do we go back to these things, that which is of the world? Or does the love of the Father, and all that He provides for us, and all that we enjoy of it, and all that we enjoy with Him, all that we enjoy of Christ, does it not satisfy us to such a degree that all that is of the world, and all that is passing, and its lusts and all that we would desire after it, is all nothing to us because we are enjoying the Father's love? How preservative it is, beloved! I just feel that it is right to bring this to bear upon us, the moral effect, of the enjoyment of the Father's love. It is not a question that we must not do this and we must not do that and so on, but in the enjoyment of the Father's love you do not even think about these things because what you are enjoying of Christ with the Father fills your heart and satisfies you where nothing else can. Would that I knew more of it for myself, and may we all know more of it that the Father Himself may be satisfied in what He finds in us! Surely it would move our hearts to worship as we have a sense of His greatness and the way He has reached out to us and provided for us. May Christ have a greater place in our hearts as the Father would share Him with us! And surely the Holy Spirit who has come forth from with the Father would help us in this as we just open our hearts to Him. Well, may the Lord bless the word!

Grangemouth

31 March 2007

INFLUENCE

Norman J Henry

**1 John 3:8;
Isaiah 53:1-2 “ground”;
John 14:30-31; 16:7-11;
Luke 8:26-39;
Galatians: 4:26, 30-31**

I would like to refer to the thought of influence. I am not for the moment referring to influence, however important, between one and another, but the influence that God requires over against the influence that the world has on us. We are in critical times. God has not changed.

It is quite clear in 1 John 3 that the devil has not changed from the beginning. He is a liar from the beginning; he is deceptive; he is the ancient serpent. It is very solemn to remember that the whole race is affected by influence. We cannot say that we are not under influence. The world lives that way. Man as away from God is under the influence of the devil. That is a sobering matter to take account of. Mankind cannot get clear of it. Without God there is no way to get him out of that influence, he is servant to that evil being, and I thought we should consider it that when the devil came in - in the beginning in Genesis - the serpent said to Eve, “ye will be as God” (Gen. 3:5). His purpose was to displace God's influence on the human family and insert his own, because he was making himself the ruler of the world. That is what the devil did, and every inhabitant in the world from then until now has experienced what it is to be under the influence of that one. In the first family were Cain and Abel. According to John, “Cain was of the wicked one” (1 John 3:12), and in divine grace God worked in a man like Abel; he came under the influence of God. The world lies in the wicked one. That is the position we are in. The young should know that the world lies in the wicked one, and there is such a being as the ruler of this world. A spiritual man like Mr Stoney said he felt the very air that we are surrounded with, not as created of God, but the very air or atmosphere of the world was detrimental to spiritual gain (Vol 2: 87). I am saying to you now that the world lies in the wicked one and all are under the powerful influence of the devil in this world; yet the world does not belong to him. The only way to redeem man from that influence was for One to come in who was free from that influence. Thanks be to God, He came in! That is the glad tidings. Christ came in, “the Son of God has

been manifested, that he might undo the works of the devil". That is glorious news! Does it fill your soul that when man could not redeem himself, could not extricate himself, the Lord Jesus came in to break the power of the devil? That is what Christ did.

The devil has not been removed yet, but he surely will be. You will still face his influence at school, you will face it in the teaching of schools, you will face it in the spirit of business, you will face it everywhere. The media, everything, is just filled with the power of the deceptive influence of the devil under which man lies. The world lies in the wicked one and they cannot extricate themselves, but here is the Son of God being manifested. It says, "To this end the Son of God has been manifested, that he might undo the works of the devil". He has got power to do it, and He has shown in coming in and going through as He did that He had power. He had power on earth, it says, to forgive sins (see Matt. 9:6). He had the power here in His Person, but His work at the cross effected it, blessed be His Name! Thank God He did it. What power is in the hand of Christ! Even the keys of death and of hades are in the hands of Christ. What a Person He is. Do you not want to be linked with Him? Why be ashamed of Him? Why refuse or hold back in confessing His name? This is the One that was manifested to undo the works of the devil. Who could do it before that? No one could do it, not even Abraham, Moses, or David, great men as they were. They could not undo the works of the devil. Only One that came in who was free from the influence of the devil would have power over him. It says a 'stronger than he coming' (Luke 11: 22). What happened? He bound the strong man and plundered his goods. Thank God for it! What a Person He is. Do you get a thrill in your soul that this almighty powerful Person has come in?

So I have read in Isaiah 53. He says, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender sapling, and as a root out of dry ground". Have you thought who that could be? Who could the prophet be speaking about? Who grew up like this? Isaiah said earlier that Israel had to take root downward and bear fruit upward (37: 31), but of this Person it says, "as a root out of dry ground". He was not influenced by the surroundings, He did not draw from them; His sap was from God. The source of that holy manhood was from God: He grew up before Him as a tender sapling. Have you thought for a minute how unique the Lord Jesus was? He came in free of the world's influence. The devil brought every temptation to Christ and found he could never spoil that holy

perfect manhood. That was the Lord Jesus. Every one of us has fallen to temptation. We have given in to it, we have lived in it according to our will. 'Oh', you say, 'I have never murdered anybody, I have never committed fornication, I have not done this or that', but you are a sinner. You were, or may be still, under the domain and bondage of sin. That is Romans 6: 16. You cannot excuse yourself. Everyone is shut up in that.

"A tender sapling" - Jesus was never hard. When the Lord Jesus was here His character could not be changed by what He faced here. His grace just poured out of Him. In Ps 45: 2 "Grace is poured into thy lips". It was not from another source exactly, but He was full of grace, and it was the overflow of it, "Grace is poured into thy lips". No wonder the psalmist speaks about Him in such an affectionate way in Psalm 45. Here this Person grows up before God. What that precious life was to God! Yet God was prepared for that precious life to be forfeited, and I say forfeited not on His account but on your account and mine. That life had to be given up. What appeared was the intrinsic perfection of this blessed manhood and the through-and-through purity of it. How hard sin makes us! Think of your own history. You do something not right, you hide it, and maybe your parents say something, or the brethren, and you feel an inward hardness. You know sin effects hardness in a person, but with Christ, He was sinless and He was a tender sapling. He was a root "out of dry ground". In one sense He never contributed anything to the surroundings. He came in His grace to meet man, but He never absorbed anything of what was in man. He wondered at the hardness of the heart of man. Think of the grace of Christ. He felt it, but it never altered the grace that was coming out. He never withheld His hand from a leper who was wanting to be cleansed, or a blind man that needed sight. As Jesus was leaving Jericho, the city of the curse, on His way to Jerusalem to suffer and die, He stopped at the call of Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46. Was there hardness in the heart of Christ? No. Beautiful manhood! He was the only One that was free of the influence of the devil, the only One who ever lived in this scene who was free, and the only One that could break its power in your soul and in mine. That is the glad tidings, to break the power of sin in your soul, and that is the way He can do it.

It says in John 14, "For the ruler of the world comes, and in me he has nothing". The ruler of the world comes. He does not need to come to you or me, we are already under his power. He comes to the Lord Jesus and He says Himself, "in me he has nothing". Is that not

wonderful? Are you glad Christ came in to break that influence? He will destroy that evil influence over the world in the day to come by His power. In His grace He can emancipate you from it now. You are of the fallen race and you say, 'Yes, I accept there was a fall in sin coming in', but you have sinned, I have sinned, we have responsibility. Those who have not yet reached the age of responsibility, God takes account of. But you and I, that have reached that age, are responsible for our own sins. In 2 Peter 2, "The dog has turned back to his own vomit; and, The washed sow to her rolling in mud" (v 22). The devil knows our weaknesses and tries to influence us. He comes to this Person and he has no entrance. He was here in perfect obedience to the influence of God. Think of that One that went through superior to the rule of the world, and in doing so He was getting a foothold in the lives and hearts of men and women through His work. I think that is wonderful.

In chapter 16 it refers to the coming of the Spirit and where this demonstration is effected. He says, "For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you". What a privilege, being in the company of Christ on earth, to be one of His disciples. From the baptism of John right through to His ascension they were in His company, but He says, 'It is better if I go'. He says that in verse 7, it is better if I go, "it is profitable for you that I go away". The Spirit was going to come. We not only have one Comforter, we have two because we have got Christ above and we have got the Spirit here. You are better provided for. It is difficult at school or in business, but nevertheless the Spirit is given and when the Spirit comes the effect of His presence in the believer is a demonstration to the world. It says that "he will bring demonstration to the world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment", and it says "of sin, because they do not believe on me; of righteousness because I go away to my Father, and ye behold me no longer; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged".

Now that judgment has got to be in you and me. There is no option, if you have received the Holy Spirit. That is the intended effect of His presence in your heart and in mine that the ruler of this world is judged. In principle it is the expression of the kingdom. Persons are set up here. We do not have any past; we have dealt with it in our souls. We have judged the world and everything in it, and we are free of its influence. You know, that is one thing that will come out in the judgment in Revelation that while the devil is viewed from the beginning as a deceiver, the two great emissaries arising from our time are the beast,

and the false prophet who deceives the nations (13: 14). I think that is where the great deception lies because the greatest light has been witnessed in this time. Well, the ruler of this world is judged, and you have that in yourself. The power of the world is broken. The children of Israel were not clear of the power of Egypt and the world while they were in Egypt (Ex 12 - 14). They had the blood on the lintel and doorposts; they knew they were clear of judgment through the blood of the Passover lamb, the angel passed over. They did not come under judgment, but typically the Red Sea involved the breaking of the power of the world, but they still hankered back (Ex 16: 3). They still wanted to go back to Egypt, they were not thoroughly clear, but the power of the Spirit is the power to be thoroughly clear and that maintained in the hearts of believers; "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged". Then "of righteousness, because I go away to my Father, and ye behold me no longer". Is that not a demonstration? He could not remain here. He has now set up a new centre in the presence of the Father and we are meant to be taken up for it.

In Luke 8 we have the man, and the woman, and the child. It is a great privilege to see so many children here. This man had been secured, he has been delivered from the influence of Satan and the world. It says, "a certain man out of the city met him". The city, as well as the tombs, was all in the scene of death. That is what the world is. You come to it that we are passing through the world for testimony and for righteousness, but the world you are passing through involves an area of death. This man is delivered out of it. What deliverance this man knew, and he is clothed and sensible at the feet of Jesus. He is under new influence, he is under new management. What a difference! Do not forget what you were. Remember that you were under the influence of Satan, and we trust through divine grace all here are brought to the feet of the Lord Jesus to be under His influence. What a Person! God has placed authority in the most attractive point in the universe in the ascended Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Is that not blessed? So I would say this man was delivered. The remarkable thing was that the multitude came out and they asked Jesus if He would depart from them. How extraordinary! The world does not want Him. They were right in the presence of Someone who could deliver them from such an atmosphere of death into such an atmosphere of life and joy, and they said, 'We want you to depart'. And He left them. Is that not sobering? But He leaves the transformed man as a witness to His powerful work. It is still the dispensation of grace and persons can be

delivered from the power of the evil one.

Finally, in Galatians these persons were reverting to the law. They were trying to make perfect the flesh. They started well, "Ye ran well" (5: 7). I think we sometimes forget that, but something had come in, something had hindered them, they had come to a halt. Do we always go forward? We have to confess that our love ebbs and flows. We need encouragement; come to the meeting and be lifted up. We need to move forward. They thought, 'now that we have received from Christ, we can walk according to the law'. They were really going back to the law, to Judaism, and what the apostle says here is there is no inheritance for the son of the maid servant. Hagar was the Egyptian maid servant to Sarai, Abraham's wife, and there was a time when he gave her a portion and sent her away, but the inheritance was Isaac's. That is emphasised here there is no inheritance for Hagar; there is no inheritance for the children of the one that is under bondage. Dear brethren, in the present day "Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother". What an influence to be under! What liberty! What joy! It is an administration of goodness. That is what it means.

You know, in a day to come the nations will come up to the earthly Jerusalem, the literal city in the Middle East. The nations that do not go up to it will come under the wrath of God (Zech 14: 17-19). In Galatians it refers to the present, Jerusalem which is above. It is not the earthly Jerusalem, it is the Jerusalem above. Think of the liberty, think of the inheritance that is linked with this because we are the children of the free woman. He was just saying, 'Why go on, Galatians, with such a petty outlook when Jerusalem above is free, and there is liberty, and there is well-being, everybody looked after and every need met'. Is that not blessed? That is the influence we need to be under. Do not let us return to the law - how easily it comes in. We think we can go by law. Law effected nothing, but brought out the sinnership of the people. But grace and everything that flows from that city which is above, our mother, that is the influence we are to be brought under.

I trust these thoughts encourage the brethren. We need to go into it, we need to see that we are delivered from the influence of the world. It is insidious. Every day, I do not doubt for a minute, it has its attempt to break through in our hearts if we are honest. We should see and discern. What does John say? "Prove the spirits, if they are of God" (1 John 4: 1). Do not just swallow everything that comes, even if it sounds good, because there might be something in it to deceive your

heart and mind. Keep under the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and may Jerusalem above be our mother in a practical way. May God bless the word to us all.

Aberdeen, Idaho

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