

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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GOD'S INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS

Exodus 15: 13-18

Psalms 22: 1-3, 21, 22

1 Peter 2: 9, 10

Ephesians 1: 15-23

AM The passage in Ephesians refers to “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”, which is an expression well-known to us: “his inheritance in the saints”: that is God's inheritance which is in the saints. I wondered if we might look at the verses we have read just to get some fresh impression of what God has secured, what He has done, and how He has done it. I think it is important that we keep in our minds the way in which divine Persons have acted. Exodus 15, where we have read, refers to many things that God has done. First, He “redeemed” the people and “guided them ... unto the abode of thy holiness”, then, later, it refers to “The place” where He has made His dwelling,

The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared.

Think of these features, all coming out in relation to what God has secured in the saints. In another passage, which comes earlier in Exodus, He establishes the fact that His people are in the relationship of sonship: “Israel is my son”. He is not Pharaoh's son; he is “my son”; and so are His sons. God puts in His claim there. Pharaoh had no right to make the people serve him. God says, “Israel is my son, my firstborn. ... Let my son go, that he may serve *me*”, Exod 4: 22, 23.

In Peter it is a question of what God has secured in a people upon the earth, “a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession”, and it is in view that we “might set forth the excellencies of him who has called” us, that there should be that display. This is what God is looking for at the present time, really what He will display eternally. It is also true that God must have something on the earth at the present time. It would not be morally right if Christ had been rejected from this scene and God did not have a display of His excellencies here. He is continued in His people down here. The apostle writes, “that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light”.

In Ephesians Paul goes into the heights. He prays that we might have “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, being enlightened in the eyes of your heart, so that ye should know

what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints". The saints are here upon the earth in rejection by the world as Jesus was, of no significance to man's world at all. What does God have in such people? There are "the riches of the glory" manifested. Later in this book we get the angels looking down, "the principalities and authorities" looking down in wonder at "the all-various wisdom of God" (chap 3: 10) because of what has been wrought for His own pleasure. This is all for His pleasure; this is God's inheritance. What a result from the work of Jesus! Perhaps the brethren can help to expand these thoughts.

DAB Would it be right to say that there is really nothing outside the inheritance or the assembly that divine Persons find their satisfaction in? In one sense divine Persons are self-existent. As Man, Christ finds His all in the assembly. Would it be right to say divine Persons themselves find that in the saints?

AM It must be so. There is no other body at this time that is being formed through faith and believing. The assembly is before the eye of God, and this is where He finds His dwelling. The Holy Spirit is here, and where He dwells is the dwelling place of God. What a heritage God finds in the assembly!

DAB The scripture in Exodus 15 refers in verse 13 to redemption at the beginning. What you go on to is the matter of purchase, is it not? There is a continuation there, an added thought,

Till the people pass over that thou hast purchased.

That really relates to assembly truth.

AM It does. We as individuals are redeemed: God had a claim upon us, but because of what we are by nature, we have come under another power, but God has acted and redeemed us. Now, the assembly has no such history. The assembly is holy. Take the type of Eve, taken out of the side of Adam. No alien power has had a claim there, but God has purchased her and at what a price!

JL Can you enlarge just a little on how the Possessor of all things can inherit anything?

AM Well, that is a wonderful thing. We have that marvellous hymn, number 5, which contains the words,

For, added to the riches that were then,

Thou hast secured vast myriads of men
Thy house to fill.

The way divine Persons have worked is that there is increase for God.
You have something in mind.

JL Just to magnify the wonder of what has been secured through the work of the Lord Jesus in answer to the purpose of divine love that never existed before!

AM It is wonderful! In man's world matter can neither be created nor destroyed. In God's world there is what is new and living and what did not exist before, and it is all for His pleasure.

JCG Does it come out in relation to David? 1 Chronicles 29 speaks about the way in which God has drawn them together, "for all is of thee, and of that which is from thy hand have we given thee" (v 14), and it goes on further and says, "In the uprightness of my heart have I willingly offered all these things" (v 17), and then he speaks about "thy people" offering "willingly". That is the great result of the work of God in each one of us.

AM I think so. I was looking at that passage in the interval. What you say is very confirming. David attributes everything to God; he speaks of "thy people". God is interested in souls; it is the people, His saints. God is faithful to His creation obviously and He cares for it, but Paul says, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn. Is God occupied about the oxen ... ?", 1 Cor 9: 9. God is concerned about His people, and that is His inheritance.

JCG You can help us further as to the matter of guiding them "unto the abode of thy holiness", which, of course, was first established in the wilderness, and then, "The Sanctuary", which really is the spiritual power in the heavenlies, is it not?

AM The people here had the end in view. Now, they did not know what the wilderness journey was going to be like, but they had the light as to the end in view, did they not? The people in a sense were sanctified, taken apart. Another verse that was in my mind was Balak when he hired Balaam; he said, "Behold, a people is come out of Egypt" (Num 22: 11), of no account in the world, but they had "come out of Egypt". They had been redeemed. God had put in His claim. Balaam had no appreciation of them. He said, "Behold, a people"; he did not put a name to them, but God had an appreciation of them. He said, 'They

are mine'.

JTB In Exodus 25 Jehovah says, "And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them", v 8. That is preceded by the heave-offering, v 2. Is that really the product of God's own workmanship in souls providing an environment in which God can dwell for His own satisfaction?

AM Yes, that is very good, and that heave-offering was provided by the willing-hearted and the wise-hearted, Exod 35. I think those two things are needed. The affections are involved in the willing-hearted; and the wise-hearted are intelligent as to what is suitable for God.

TWL I wonder if we could think that the souls must be redeemed, but God purchases the heart? Could we say that purchase has in mind affection, which is in line with desire? He "purchased" the assembly "with the blood of his own", Acts 20: 28. It is the valuation according to the desire of God. He redeemed souls. He has a right to souls and He redeems them.

AM He has a right and He redeems, but the purchase in relation to the assembly was at a great cost. Now, I am sure most have been in a situation where something may be offered for sale, and when you look at the price you say, 'It is not worth it!'. How great then is the assembly that God was prepared to pay that cost, "purchased with the blood of his own". The assembly in that setting in Acts 20 is what is on the earth here. It does not there refer to the glorious end according to divine purpose. Paul there is referring to the assembly on earth, and he is saying that God was prepared to pay that price to purchase the assembly that He should have it as His inheritance.

RG There is a scripture in Ephesians, "For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus", chap 2: 10. There is what is perfect and glorious according to His own thoughts.

AM That is right. "We are his workmanship". We have been created "for good works". The good works are what were seen in the life of Jesus here. How much pleasure the Father took in the life of Jesus! What delight that life was to Him! Well, we have been created so that there is in us that which is capable of setting forth something of those good works which were seen in Christ. That is a blessed thing. You might think, 'What can I do?', but you can do something.

GBG Does this explain what you were saying about Acts 20, because

what was purchased needs to be shepherded. Did you say it is on the earth?

AM I think so. Let us look at the passage, “Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own”. The elders will not be shepherding the assembly of God in eternity. It is the assembly down here that needs care and attention.

GBG Could you bring it down to the local assembly? Overseers are local.

AM Oh yes, that is right. That is where we are responsible and where we get the expression of it. You could not now find every person who belongs to the assembly in Bo'ness coming together. It would not be possible now although it will happen one day soon, but we seek to walk in the light of it, and you cannot do any more than that, which means we keep ourselves apart from what is not in the light of it.

GBG I am glad you say that. Do you think it elevates in our minds what there is in each place, the assembly in a place of which we are part? That elevates the whole thing.

AM Yes, it does. It lifts us up above what is outward. It is what God sees, and God has arranged. God has set us together for a purpose, and it is for *His* pleasure.

BB The thought of God's name being set carries the idea of His renown.

AM A day is coming when His glory will be seen publicly in connection with the saints, but the glory of God is to be known among the saints, is it not? It is to be known, maybe not in an outward way, but it is still glory, and it is seen in “the riches of the glory of his inheritance”.

DCB In verse 13 of Exodus 15 it says, “Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness”. Later, in verse 17, it says, “Thou shalt bring them in”. Say something as to the fact that verse 13 views them as already brought in.

AM If God says that He is going to do something, it is as good as done. We can rely on God; He is faithful to His word; and if He says He is going to do something, then we can accept that as if it had actually taken place. It is as good as done.

DCB Does it help us to have that view, to see that what God has in mind He has done? It speaks of Abraham as believing “the God ... who calls the things which be not as being”, Rom 4: 17. He had a view of things complete in God's mind.

AM I do feel, dear brethren, that we need to get firmly in our souls the greatness of the assembly as a glorious entity. I never tire of the last two chapters of Revelation. See the assembly in her glory according to divine purpose! Get that view into our souls first because otherwise we will be governed by breakdown and failure and the history of the church, and that is not what is to govern our thoughts.

AGM All these matters,

... the mountain of thine inheritance,
The place that thou, Jehovah, hast made thy dwelling,
The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared”

are to be found in the local assembly. One of the old brothers local with us in Cullen used to remind us, 'Keep the purpose of God before you and work on to that', and that is really you “Hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness”. Do you think occasions like this help us in this way, that our eyes are focused on God's great thoughts?

AM Well, that is right, and that is what, we trust, is happening today. God acts according to His own purpose. He has not had to deviate from His purpose. That is settled, and He acts according to His own purpose in order to fulfil what will be for His glory eternally.

JL The abode of God's holiness and guiding His people into that is a consequence of God's love, is it not? That is what God rests in. “The abode of thy holiness” is love. “He will rest in his love”, Zeph 3: 17. That is His final abode, is it not?

AM Yes, it is. His love was the source of everything. God had a need because His nature is love. He had a need for that love to be expressed. That is a feature of love; it must be expressed. It must have an object. And the love of God required an object on which it could be expressed, and this is what He has secured, saints in sonship, secured in the assembly. That is where the love of God can be really known.

JSS Does the thought of planting suggest life and fruitfulness? Does God receive His inheritance from people who are characterised

by enjoying life?

AM I think that is right. It also suggests care, the care of a gardener. If you plant something, you choose your location, you have the right soil, and you use care and nurture it. It says in one of the psalms, “Thou, O God, didst pour a plentiful rain upon thine inheritance, and when it was weary thou strengthenedst it”, Ps 68: 9. Think of God exercising that care in order that there should be what is living, what is springing up to Him in response!

NCMCK Was it mentioned earlier that “Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness” was initially the wilderness; whereas the reference that follows to “the Sanctuary” has in mind what is heavenly? I need more help with that.

AM Well, that is what they were being guided to. “Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness”. They are coming out to the wilderness. For the first month they were just being carried by grace, and then God said, “And they shall make me a sanctuary” (Exod 25: 8), and the first thing is, “they shall make an ark”, v 10. Does that help?

NCMCK It has helped very much. It confirms what you have been saying about the value of the assembly, what God has here on earth at the present time, something very valuable where He can make His abode. We tend to defer the thought of God's inheritance to what He will have eternally, but actually what He has here now is precious and by way of an abode at the present time, an inheritance here.

AM It would be morally impossible for God to be without that which is pleasing to Himself on the earth now. The Lord Jesus has been here; the world has rejected Him and He has gone on high. Could it be possible that for two thousand years the world has gained the superiority? It could not be. God has secured something through the work of Christ. I asked for the opening of Psalm 22 to be read because it shows us something of the cost it was to Him; so the psalmist could say, “why hast thou forsaken me? ... And thou art holy”. To secure “the abode of” His “holiness” required the cross.

JCG The Spirit is really the abode, is He not? “He abides with you”, John 14: 17. “The abode of thy holiness”, somebody remarked that this is perfect tense. I wondered if that is how it would affect our making way for the Spirit through the week. In our meetings we enjoy eternal life in

which we move in prayer to divine Persons. We rely on “the abode”, that is the Spirit dwelling within us, whereas “the Sanctuary”, as we have been taught in ministry, really is the service of God, and the presence of God in the heavenlies.

AM That is right. In the holy of holies there was nothing but what speaks of Christ. There was the ark in all its excellence and glory: that was in the divine presence.

NJH “A habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph 2: 22): does that not confirm what we are saying? I was thinking God will not have lost anything by public breakdown, will He? My mind went to Zephaniah, “Fear not; Zion, let not thy hands be slack. Jehovah thy God is in thy midst, a mighty one that will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will exult over thee with singing”, chap 3: 16, 17.

AM That passage is beautiful. God rejoicing, exulting over His people. What joy the word “exult” conveys, and that is what God does: “He will exult over thee with singing”.

BWL The end of Psalm 78 speaks about “Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance”, v 71. I was thinking when Paul went to Corinth, the Lord told him He had “much people in this city”, Acts 18: 10. Does that relate to the wilderness side of things? Then Ephesians is God's “inheritance in the saints”, the saints viewed from the purpose of God.

AM Well, that is right, there are the sanctified ones. We were saying this morning that our part is with the sanctified ones. That is the company we have, but God looks upon them, each one a saint, and that is the divine viewpoint, but “the people”, I think, particularly relates to the wilderness. “Till the people pass over”, it says in this song.

DS Does, “The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared” involve the operations of the three divine Persons? I wondered if you could help us in relation to that. This is the climax of everything God is seeking to arrive at, the place where He dwells. Does it involve, “I go to prepare you a place”, John 14: 2? It involves the operations of the Spirit in the formation of the assembly, and the Father as “bringing many sons to glory” (Heb 2: 10). Is this the great thought of the operations of divine Persons?

AM I think so. Think of what it meant to the Lord Jesus to undertake that great work, and then when the Lord Jesus rose, there was that little company that were to form the embryo of the assembly. What an

extraordinary thing took place in the history of the world at Pentecost! A divine Person came down out of heaven, "and filled all the house", Acts 2: 2. There was the start of this great dispensation in which we are in which the presence of the Holy Spirit is known.

ABB Looking to verse 18 which you read, "Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever!", you have mentioned the world and its disregard for God's rights, but do you think there is real pleasure from the divine side in those who acknowledge divine rights as Christ ever did as Man here on earth? It is real savour and pleasure to God.

AM That is right, and the thought of reigning takes you beyond Moses. It takes you on to David. We have already had a reference to David. God made known to Moses where He was going to dwell, but to David that He was going to reign. His rights would be acknowledged; His kingdom would be established; and David says in the passage that has already been quoted, "Thine, Jehovah, is the kingdom", 1 Chron 29: 11. It is all His, and He is going to have that place, gladly acknowledged by His people, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power", Psalm 110: 3. Well, the day of His power is now in the souls of the saints. You do not put that off until the millennium.

I just referred to that passage earlier where Jehovah put in His claim and He said to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my firstborn", Exod 4: 22. The greatest blessing we can enter into is sonship, sons before God. What a dignity that is! We might have thought that sonship only belongs to our eternal portion, but Mr Darby's hymn says:

And here we walk as sons, through grace (Hymn 120).

The world cannot see that we are sons. It is the believer's secret. How is it that he goes through this scene with a certain dignity that a lot of people do not understand? It comes out in his language; it comes out in the way he comports himself. Why is that? It is because he is a son, part of God's inheritance!

DAB It says in Galatians, "But because ye are sons" (chap 4: 6); so every believer is a son.

AM "For ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus", Gal 3: 26.

DAB And then it says, "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father", Gal 4: 6. That is the wonderful power for response, is it not?

AM Well, it is.

DAB And God's enjoyment of His inheritance is in that matter of sonship.

AM Exactly. What pleasure He finds in His sons! Even naturally a father would find pleasure in his sons. What pleasure God would find in His sons! "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts", the Spirit of that One, that One who always gave Him pleasure. There was not a moment when He did not find pleasure in the life of Jesus. The Spirit of that One has come into our hearts.

DAB It is a very stabilising matter just to think that we are sons, every person in this room, all the young folk, those who are believers in the Lord Jesus; they *are* sons according to divine promise. Whether we appreciate it or enjoy it, it is in one sense irrespective, but God has said, 'This is the Spirit I have given you so that you might enjoy the blessings of sonship'.

AM And there are times when we may not behave as a son should, but the Father will never disinherit us. He still loves us; He still retains the relationship.

BB Where does the new man fit into this?

AM You have something in your mind. The new man really is the display of Christ here in the saints.

BB In Ephesians it is God's workmanship, but in Colossians you have to put it on, the features of Christ that God finds so pleasurable, worked out in the saints through suffering, through sorrow.

AM Yes, whatever the circumstances. The Lord Jesus went through all the circumstances of life. He knew what it was to come into this scene and be rejected of His own; He knew what sorrow was; He knew what it was to suffer; He knew what it was to be accused of things He had never done; He knew what it was to be rejected simply because of the goodness that shone out in Him, and He knew the joys of life too. He knew what it was to gather His own around Him. He knew what it was to have joy in them. He went through all the circumstances of life and the new man is the display of what was seen in Jesus in the saints here whatever their circumstances.

TWL Would you help in relation to Psalm 22 about how God has done this? I was wondering whether the scripture in Acts 2: 23, "him, given

up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” fits in to how God has done this.

AM Yes, the Lord Jesus came into this world with the full knowledge of divine counsel. It was all in His heart. He knew that He came in order to suffer and to die. Now, we came into this world to live. He came in to suffer and to die, and the sufferings included those which none other could endure. We read that terrible cry in Psalm 22, and when the Lord Jesus was on the cross, I might say carefully, He did not simply quote scripture. There were no other words that He could use in that awful cry.

TWL I was thinking of it in the light of what we have had in relation to redemption and purchase, and what you said in relation to cost. Only God could determine cost. It was the life of Christ. It should affect us, should it not, that that is how God has viewed us before ever there was a sin question? He has viewed us as valuable enough that the life of Christ was the purchase price.

AM And so the answer did not come on the cross. The answer came in the place of death. “Yea, from the horns of the buffaloes hast thou answered me”. Resurrection is the great divine answer! Christ was raised, raised and glorified by God. How could He not be raised and glorified?

NJH The Lamb was “foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1: 20); so God knew the cost then as well as the One who would take up that condition.

AM How great then the love that took such a way, but then how great the result! God's inheritance, how great it must be that a divine Person should take that way, even going into death and remaining there for the three days and three nights. What did God have on the earth for three days and three nights? But the moment came when He had His Son in resurrection.

JTB Does “the horns of the buffaloes” suggest it was from the most distant point? The forsaking, and then His death, involved that; He could not go further, could He?

AM We read of the scapegoat in Leviticus, and it went “to a land apart from men”, Lev 16: 22. I remember Mr Craig saying that when the Lord Jesus suffered on the cross, He did not only go “to a land apart from men”; He went to a land apart from God. That is very affecting.

God actually forsook Him; He forsook Him there on that cross: He was alone, absolutely alone.

GBG I was just thinking about that. He actually acknowledged to His God that He had forsaken Him.

AM And publicly. Men heard it; they said, "If thou art Son of God, descend from the cross", Matt 27: 40. In one account it says, "if he will have him", Matt 27: 43. He publicly had to acknowledge that God had forsaken Him. Terrible thing! But it was necessary in order that God should have an answer, and that answer should involve us.

JCG He entered the grave as well. I wondered if that was why prophetically the Lord says, "by night". He speaks about "by day" as to the sufferings and the forsaking, but "by night, and there is no rest for me". The full three days had to be entered into. We understand the Lord would have felt the extent of that tremendously.

AM Yes, so when He was buried - this is very holy ground; it does not do to speculate - how God felt it; the Lord Jesus was actually dead and buried. Think of those thirty-three and a half years of unbroken communion, the pleasure that God had in them. Then the Lord actually died, and God felt that, and how the Lord felt it as going into death! He was out of sight in that tomb. How morally essential it was that at the end of those three days He should be raised. Every attribute of God was involved in the resurrection of Jesus.

NJH What does that mean, every attribute of God?

AM The Father could not leave Him in death. His love would not allow it. But it was also a matter of righteousness that He should be raised. "For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see corruption", Ps 16: 10. The Holy One had to be raised from the dead. God's power was involved in raising Him from among the dead, and one thing which we should find so appealing is that God's grace was involved because if Christ was not raised, where would we be? The grace of God was involved in raising Christ from among the dead.

NJH "Raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father" (Rom 6: 4) encompasses that.

AM Exactly. I do not think "the glory of the Father" can be limited to one thing. It is all that the Father is, "the glory of the Father".

AMB And that it was secured thereby answers to verse 3, the holiness of God. He was going to dwell “amid the praises of Israel” in conditions that the Lord Jesus had secured by the work He has done, answering to the holiness of God.

AM Yes, indeed; so as soon as the answer comes it is “in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee”. The praises are there. They were there from the moment of resurrection. There was the great answer, and this was God’s portion.

GBG It has been said that often in the epistles the resurrection is God thinking about men. “Raised for our justification” (Rom 4: 25) is God thinking of blessing men in resurrection. Of course, there was what was for the Father’s pleasure especially.

AM Well, that is right, and I think what we have said as to all that the Father is being involved in that is for our blessing, is it not?

AMB What do you say about verse 22, the Father’s name declared and praises in the midst of the congregation? The Father had never been known in that way before.

AM I think the disciples would have taken account of the Lord Jesus in prayer to the Father. They asked Him to teach them to pray; so they would have been conscious that there was a relationship there that in a sense was mysterious to them. They did not have that same relationship, but in resurrection the Lord says, “go to my brethren”. In that relationship they were to enter into, the Father’s name was declared, “my Father and your Father”, John 20: 17. What a day, the day of resurrection, was!

AMB Something wonderful came to light in the Lord in resurrection that was for the Father’s pleasure and would be for His glory too.

AM Yes, indeed. From that day, after those terrible three days, the Father found pleasure on earth, and that has not stopped, has it? The presence of the Holy Spirit here has guaranteed that, and will guarantee it to the end.

AGM Does the name of the Father involve all that is knowable of the Father? We have spoken of the nature of God and the attributes of God, but the Lord has made known everything that is known now as to the Father. Would you say some more about that?

AM The name Father always conveys God known in grace, and that

gives character to the day in which we are. The grace of God is flowing; it is available; and the Father is the source of it. Think of the grace that is towards us, the grace that has met us, the grace that had taken us up, and has changed us by that precious work, so that there should be something suited and pleasurable to the One who has shown the grace.

AGM So there has been a full revelation of the Father, and there is no other way that this could have been done. Does that really bring out the depths of the heart of God in wanting to make Himself known?

AM That is right. There could be no other way. The Father's heart is so great that in order to make it known the depths had to be, to us, immeasurable. The Lord Jesus measured them. They were not unfathomable to Him, but they are to us.

Well, in Ephesians Paul bows his knees in prayer, chap 3: 14. It is not the only time he does this. It is as if he would say, those matters are so great, it needs divine power to make them known; so he bows his knees, making mention of the saints in his prayers that they should have “the full knowledge of him, being enlightened in the eyes of your heart, so that ye should know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”. Paul had spent three years in Ephesus. He knew the brethren there; he had been in their houses; he had helped them. He also knew what was going to come in afterwards; but he did not lose his appreciation of the brethren. He said, “that ye should know ... the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”. Paul had a valuation of them as part of God's inheritance.

DAB Can you say something as to the title, “the Father of glory”?

AM Everything that God does is characterised by glory. He is the source of it, and everything that the Father does is glorious. There is glory which is for us to take account of and is seen in divine Persons in the way they have acted, but then there is soon to be the public glory, but it is all of the Father. But what would you say?

DAB It is very blessed as to “what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints” is. It is really a shining out of His glory, and it is “his inheritance in the saints”.

AM Yes, in fact that is what glory is, a shining out. It is the shining out of all that is of God. That is the glory of God. Now, Abraham saw the God of glory. Stephen speaks about that (Acts 7: 2), but Stephen saw

something that Abraham did not see: “he saw the glory of God, and Jesus” (Acts 7: 55), and the glory of God is shining out, not only in heaven as Stephen saw it, but it is shining out in the saints that have been secured here. Look at the work of God, and it is all for His glory!

DAB What you see in the saints is the product of divine glory shining; it has entered into us and it is shining out.

AM Yes, It is not just a reflection.

JCG In Romans 8 Paul says, “whom he has justified, these also he has glorified”, v 30. Do you think we need to appreciate what the Spirit has in each one? It would help us to keep positive in relation to the truth. I was thinking again of Caleb. He went with the other spies into the land to get the fruit of the land when he was forty, but when he became fifty, he did not go back; when he was sixty, he did not go back. He carried on, and that is the glory really of what the Spirit does in the saints, and we need to appreciate that in one another, do we?

AM Yes, it must have been shining out in Caleb. When you think about it, he was eighty-five years old when he asked for that mountain, and he was forty years old when the spies came back. That means he had been in the land for not much more than five years. Actually, he had been in conflict in the land. He would say the enemy is not having this territory and he had been in conflict in the land for five years, yet still there was no diminution in his affection, no hardness had entered into him. He still had that mountain in his heart. Wonderful man! May we be more like Caleb!

JL Does that in some way reflect the fact that the power of God is surpassing? “The surpassing greatness of his power” is “towards us”. It was rightly exercised in raising Christ from among the dead, but what God has effected among the saints shows the activity of His surpassing power in operating for His glory among the saints.

AM That is right. “The surpassing greatness of his power” was exercised once in the raising of Christ from among the dead, but that same power, the power that raised the Lord Jesus out of death, is “towards us”. Naturally, we may wonder about that, but it is true. It says, “the surpassing greatness of his power ... in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead” is “towards us”.

MBG I was wondering about 2 Corinthians 4 where it says, “the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our

hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”, v 6. He “shone in our hearts for the shining forth”, but then that chapter goes on to say, “our momentary and light affliction works for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory”, v 17. I was wondering if what is worked out at the present time has a substantial result for God. It is not only a reflection, but there is a work in each one that will result in something substantial for God. I wondered if it would relate to the glory of His grace, the greatness of all that God has secured through His operation of grace.

AM Yes, that is good, and the “weight of glory” just conveys that, what is substantial. There is nothing fanciful about divine ways. There is something being worked out and it is substantial. What goes on in the hearts of the saints is substantial. There is “an eternal weight of glory” being wrought, and God sees it in that way. Now, many people have experiences, but not everybody gets the benefit of them, but God would use our experiences to work out “an eternal weight of glory”.

JL There is a splendour and variety of God's work amongst the saints that brings out all the colours, is there not?

AM When light passes into another medium, like from air into glass, for example, it breaks down into its component colours. That is how you see a rainbow, but what is in those colours was all in the original light. All those different wavelengths were in the original white light, but we can see one glory after another.

NCMcK The Father of glory means that whatever glory there is, God is the Father of it. It takes character from Him. It results in glory to Him, the glory in us, even the glory in Christ. The glory of Christ is that God has placed that Man at the centre of His universe. It shows what God is. Every glory, God is the Father of it.

AM Yes, Mr Darby says, addressing the Father,

But not an eye those hosts among
But sees His glory Thine. (Hymn 178)

The glory we see shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of God. How wonderful that the glory of God could thus be known. God said to Moses, “Man shall not see me and live” (Exod 33: 20), but in the face of Jesus, it is shining, shining in the face of a Man.

ASP It involves “the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the

Christ in raising him from among the dead". It is the same power which works in us. It is an inward thing. These exercises and things which are worked out are God's work in us.

AM That is right. Sufferings which the saints go through can be excruciating, but the power is there, not only to sustain them, to bear them, but through them to work out something which is glorious, which God can take His delight in.

GBG "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints".

AM Well, we are occupied with the saints of the assembly, but I take it that everyone that is secured by God will be glorious to Him and part of what He has secured. "At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!", Num 23: 23. Think of all that He has wrought, and that will come out in a day to come.

GBG In this dispensation, quoting Mr A J Gardiner, whenever a believer gives thanks for his food, that is part of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. God gets a portion from that.

AM Well, He does. Giving thanks is a very important thing generally. We find in the epistles that prayer is often linked with giving thanks. The apostle says, "but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus", Phil 4: 6, 7. If a believer asks for something, it may be that God will grant it; it may not be; but what the believer gets is peace. Mix the request with thanksgiving and you get peace, "the peace of God".

ADM Would your reference in Peter then be in line with the result 2 Corinthians 4 speaks of, "that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light"? "A holy nation, a people for a possession"; "for star differs from star in glory", 1 Cor 15: 41.

AM Yes, indeed, but they all have glory. The stars are different, yet all are glorious; so Peter says, "ye are a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession". These are four great designations, but the purpose of it all is, "that ye might set forth the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness to his wonderful light". It is not just to light but it is "to his wonderful light", and we have been called to what is wonderful in order that we "might set forth the

excellencies” of Christ. Very blessed! Can you say some more?

ADM I was thinking of Joseph's coat of many colours. That set forth “the excellencies” in the Person of Christ. Is what you are speaking of really as a result of that?

AM As we are not capable of taking in all the glories of Christ at once, divine skill has been involved in this. Human beings have been so constructed that we can take account of one glory at a time, just one thing after another; the different colours that you are speaking of come to light. We can take account and feast our souls on one glory, and then another glory, and really that happens in a time like this, does it not?

Bo'ness

12th October 2024

List of Initials:-

B Bain, Fraserburgh; A B Brown, Linlithgow; A M Brown, Linlithgow; D A Brown, Bo'ness; D C Brown, Edinburgh; J T Brown, Edinburgh; R Gardiner, Aberdeen; G B Grant, Dundee; M B Grant, Grangemouth; J C Gray, Bo'ness; N J Henry, Glasgow; J Laurie, Brechin; T W Lock, Edinburgh; B W Lovie, Aberdeen; A G Mair, Cullen; A Martin, Buckhurst Hill; N C McKay, Glasgow; A D Melville, Grangemouth; A S Pittman, Grangemouth; J S Speirs, Grangemouth; D Spinks, Bo'ness

NEARNESS

Kevin J Walkinshaw

John 14: 23; 15: 5; 14: 15-17

Galatians 4: 6

I had a simple impression, beloved brethren, following our brother's service in the preaching yesterday, as to God's desire for nearness. I thought of these scriptures and how, speaking simply, God could not come any nearer than He has, to abide with us, to abide in us. We will come on to speak about the Holy Spirit, perhaps particularly, that He is with us and in us and abiding with us. God could not have come any nearer to us; and it continues; it remains. It is not something that comes and goes; when God makes His abode with us, it is forever; it is something that remains. If there is any lack of nearness, if any distance comes in, it is on our side, because God's desire is to be near to us. As our brother reminded us in the gospel, God's desire is for nearness.

These scriptures came to mind as they all reference this word, "abode" or "abide". The first section speaks of the Father *and* the Lord, "we will come to him and make **our** abode with him". What an amazing thing that is, that divine Persons would make their dwelling with us. There is a condition, is there not - "If any one love me, he will keep my word"? Well, it is a challenge for myself, how much I love divine Persons, how much I love the Lord. There is no lack on the divine side: the Lord has proved His love beyond any measure, beyond anything that we could ever think of. It says here, "If any one love me". The result of it is that if we love the Lord Jesus and keep His word, the Father will love us and will come to us and make His abode with us. It is a wonderful, amazing thing that divine Persons would desire to come so near and to make their dwelling with us. It is not something that will come and go from the divine side; it is an abode; it has that sense of it. It is something that remains and is settled, a dwelling place.

Further on, in chapter 15, the Lord speaks again, speaking of Himself as the vine and us as the branches. "He that abides in me and I in him"; what a condition, what a privilege that is, that we can abide in the Lord and He in us. You may wonder at these things. Divine Persons are so great, so glorious, ruling over all, and yet the Lord desires that we abide in Him and He in us. Again, it is an abiding thing,

not something that comes and goes. The Lord does not desire that. The Lord will not come and go. We might, but this is an ongoing position and it says, “*he* bears much fruit”. I take that challenge to myself. How much fruit am I bearing? If we abide in the Lord, we bear fruit; there is no doubt about it. And He says, “without me, ye can do nothing”. Well, how often we prove that; without the Lord we can do nothing. We might try. I often try to do things myself, but this sets it out clearly: “without me ye can do nothing”. The Lord's desire is to abide with us and us with Him.

Then I thought I would touch on the blessed Holy Spirit. We have been reminded, have we not, that God has sent out His *own* Spirit into our hearts, His own Spirit to be with us? How could God get any nearer, than He would send His *own* Spirit to us, to dwell with us, to abide in us? As it says in chapter 14, “he abides with you, and shall be in you”. God's desire for nearness is such that He would send out His own Spirit to dwell in our hearts, to be so near, to be with us and in us, to help us, to guide us; as has been said by others, to cause us to think and to feel how God thinks and feels about matters. You wonder at that, that God would desire to be so near that we might feel things as He feels them and think about things as He does. That is how near God desires to be with us.

That final scripture came to mind: “God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts”. How could God come any nearer? He sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, “crying, Abba, Father”. These were simple thoughts that came to me following our brother's word; God's desire for nearness. All three divine Persons are involved in this, that they would desire to make their abode with us. And the Holy Spirit “in our hearts, crying, Abba, Father”. We could speak about sonship, the nearness that God desires in that. We have spoken of it many times: no distance, but peace and liberty and freedom and nearness in God's house.

May we be encouraged by these things and may we all desire to abide more with the Lord, for His Name's sake. Amen.

FIVE STONES

Dave A Barlow

1 Samuel 17: 40

Matthew 4: 18-22

I read this passage in Matthew before coming out and I was wondering about it: why does Matthew record these four brothers? As to their position when called, there is not a lot of difference between them; they are all fishermen. Then too, I wondered as to the reason for them to be recorded here separately, apart from the other disciples? And as I was reflecting upon this, this scripture in 1 Samuel came to mind, and I would like to suggest these four men might represent some of the smooth stones that David had.

The five stones David selected probably looked similar; any casual observer would say they were the same; it would not matter which one David used against Goliath; but David knew them. I know it has been suggested that when David reached into his bag, he could have used any one of them, but I am thinking of the care that David took to select these stones. It struck me, beloved brethren, of the care and the interest the Lord has in each of His own, each one valuable to Him. I have often been impressed when I listen back to the recordings of our local readings, what each brother has by experience, when brought forward in the inquiry, often blends perfectly together in the company, each part different, but each one representing a smooth stone that the Lord has. And I think of the sisters on the back row - each one has something the Lord uses as is pleasing to Him. The scripture coming to mind thinking about it was "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might" (Eccl 9: 10), and how good it is to observe that, a brother or a sister, having an indication of something they have been given to do, and they do it with their might. It does good to see it.

So, I thought about these four, that they were all fishermen, but how different their futures were. They all followed Him, but the Lord had a particular interest in each one, and He had a particular service for each one. And He loved each one. We have Simon called Peter, we have so much recorded about Simon's history - first Peter. He was here with his brother, casting the net into the sea; they were both fishers and they were to be fishers of men. When the Lord calls them, their circumstances were exactly the same. But where does Andrew come

in scripture? He is not often mentioned, though he was a fisherman like Peter. We do not know much about him, but the Lord had a purpose for that. Peter is brought forward in a particular way publicly for the service the Lord would have him to do; but there was Andrew too - maybe not so well known - but seen by the Lord and perfectly suitable for what the Lord had in mind, in service, for Him. Both were fishers of men, both were needed. Perhaps it was the same service but carried out in a different way, but perfect for what the Lord would desire of His smooth stones.

And then we have the other two brothers; James the son of Zebedee and John his brother; they were mending their nets. That might suggest that the service that they were to take up was somewhat different - you might say naturally they had the same skills as Andrew and Peter, but the Lord found them mending their nets. What does that suggest? I do not know, beloved, but one thing we can trace in the history of John is that, while Peter was given a prominent place in service, John was a supporting brother. John was the apostle that went on; we find him at the end of the recorded history. All the others were probably martyred, but John was preserved. And in times of trial, times of difficulty, in times of loss, in the assembly, John is writing those letters, exhorting the brethren in the first epistle of John to love one another; guiding and encouraging that sister in the second epistle of John; encouraging that brother in the third epistle who is going on in truth. He is mending the nets, maintaining the truth as it is to go on.

Then what about James? James was the first apostle martyred - what did he do before that? We do not know, we are not really told, but I believe he was serving in mending the nets, maintaining the assembly in his time, maintaining that which he was given responsibility for. And what a place he has, the first of the apostles that was to give up his life in relation to the testimony. We do not really see much about his history; he is slain and Peter taken prisoner by Herod in his wickedness. There is not much said about what testimony there was when he was martyred. There is not much said about what he did for the Lord in his life, but maybe we have a clue here that he served Him mending the nets, again but unseen. So, some were prominent, some not so prominent, but each one precious to the Lord, each one a smooth stone serviceable to the Master.

What a blessed privilege it is, beloved, to be taken up and retained for the Lord under His care. And if it is so be that He gives us

something to do, how He would be with us, that we might be able to go on.

I trust we are encouraged by this, beloved, as we reflect on it. I know it is a word of confirmation to the brethren, but it is coming to me as a test: if I am given something to do, will I do it with my might? Beloved, may we commit ourselves to this. How thankful we can be for one another; how thankful we can be for what the Lord has done for us; and how thankful we can be that He has taken us up for His own pleasure.

May the Lord bless the word.

HEADSHIP

Robert P Munster

Colossians 2: 18, 19

Ephesians 4: 3-7, 15, 16

These scriptures came to me while our brother was speaking first, and I was just pondering whether to take them up, and I was encouraged to do so by what our brother just had to say as to the way that the Lord takes us up individually.

I was reading this morning a reading with Mr James Taylor, in meetings about David as a type of Christ as King and Head, JT vol 2 p381-494. There was a reference to the first scripture that was read as to keeping the Lord's word (p458), and it was pointed out that it is not *words* exactly, it is "*word*" there. There is what the Lord says specifically as to commandments in John 14: 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments", and "He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me", v 21. But then in the verse read, it is changed slightly: "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him", v 23. That seems to be a more general thought. You can think of the Lord's commandments - they are quite specific things that the Lord may tell us to do. But the thought of headship: we often speak of influence, and being influenced by the Head, and so on - it is more the tenor of things.

That led me to these two scriptures in Colossians and Ephesians, which refer to headship. I do not have very specific thoughts to say about them; but obviously in Colossians 2, it is a rather negative thought - there are those that may fraudulently deprive you of your prize. The reason that may happen is that one or another may do their own wills. Well, that is easy; we can all fall into that trap, and it is something that we need to be very careful about, not to do our own wills. One of the things that was said in that reading is that we do not go to the Head with our suggestions, p455, p459. Everything comes *from* the head. We think of the human body; it is the head that tells the members of the body what to do. And so it should be in our relations with the Lord Jesus.

It starts with us individually - we all need to have that relationship with Him, obviously, and to hold Him and to get our

direction from Him. And then, as we do that individually, we find that we can work things out together in the way that is described here. If we are all holding fast the Head, then His headship can be known amongst us as we come together. And then we get this system. As I say, it is negative here, “not holding fast the head”, but what should happen is that we *do* hold fast the Head, then the body is all ministered to, and united together by the joints and bands, and it increases with the increase of God, so that all that we may have individually blends together in the way that our brother has been describing. And it is a great privilege and blessing for us to be in the enjoyment of it.

We get more detail from Ephesians 4 as to the gifts that the Lord gives to this end. And again we have had reference to the Spirit. It is the same Spirit that is in each of us, and if we all give place to the Spirit the same principle applies, that there is this unity that flows from that. One of the interesting things I have found in my history is that I have known many brethren who are very pious and diligent, and had a lot they could share from the Lord, and they would bring it forward in the meetings, and it was all good and fine; but it was not coordinated in the way, perhaps, that our brother has been describing - brothers would have what they would have individually and bring it forward, and that was fine. But one of the things I have really noticed now is the way that things work together. We have something locally, and then the same thing comes up in a fellowship meeting somewhere else, and that kind of thing. And you know then that the Lord is operating and directing behind that.

And He gives each one something different. I have often got quite worried that other brothers understand things so well and I do not understand them - it is almost discouraging in a way. It is not that we are to be specialists - the Lord would desire us to enter into understanding of all things - but He has given each of us something different to bring forward. And, as our brother has just been encouraging us to do, we should bring forward what we have. And that applies to the sisters too - it is not just what comes forward in public service, but there is always something to contribute. And then we get this working together of things. So we have these gifts that come in: it gives more detail in the section that I did not read, about the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Some gifts are specific, but everyone can engage in shepherd work and teaching; teaching at home maybe, or just encouraging and exhorting one

another. We have young people in this meeting who need encouraging and shepherding, and we can all take our part in that. Then there is the more public side of things - the ministry, edification of the body. But it is all in view of "holding the truth in love, we may grow up to him in all things, who is the head, the Christ".

Well, it would be our desire that we may become more like Him. It is not that we are autonomous individuals, that we are qualified to do our own thing. It is not a question of doing our own wills, but drawing on Him as the Head, so that we find then that everything is wonderfully coordinated and brought together in this way that is set out for us in this chapter, in Ephesians 4.

I trust that will encourage us, and link together the two words that we have had. Even that is an illustration of what I was saying: there was something I read this morning, and then the two words that were given, and those three things are all linked together. And we can trace it all to the Lord Jesus. So to Him be the glory, for His Name's sake.

Words in Ministry Meeting, Sunbury

8th November 2024

THE WILL OF GOD

Dr Frank H Bodman

It is most important we should understand what the will of God is, that we may understand His operation at the present time.

The will of God is the cause of all that is good, and of all that will abide when everything that is not according to His will shall have passed away. His work is to give effect to His will, to bring about that universe in which everything will be according to God, for His satisfaction, and in which everything will declare His glory. It will be a universe of bliss, in which every intelligent creature will be responsive to God as revealed and known, from which every trace of sin and Satan's power will be banished for ever. Nothing short of this would satisfy the heart of God. When this universe is brought to pass, He will have perfect complacency in it, hence it will abide eternally. The apostle in Ephesians 1: 8, 9 speaks of God having caused His grace to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence, having made known to us the mystery of His will; and in Ephesians 3: 18 he prays that we may be fully able to apprehend ... what is the breadth and length and depth and height. It is a wonderful thing that God should take us into His confidence, and make known to us the whole plan of what He has before Him. This enlarges our horizon, and carries us beyond all that we see going on around us in man's world, and entirely eclipses all the works of men in which they glory, and so delivers us from all the glamour of the glory of this world. We know that this world of man's will and glory passes away; it is among the things that will be shaken and removed. None can hinder what is of the will of God, and His work cannot be shaken or destroyed; this alone will stand when everything is shaken. It is important for us to see to it that our interest and service is connected with that which will abide, and not with that world which is about to pass away; that we should be in communion with the revealed will of God.

Then it is a great thing to know that God has found in Christ a perfect servant, a man after His own heart who is well able to do all His will. In Ephesians 1, we get instruction as to what is God's will for the coming day, for the administration of the fulness of the times, that is, to bring the whole created system under the headship of Christ - things in heaven and things on earth. In this way all things will be reconciled to

God by Christ, He having made peace by the blood of His cross. As Head He will give character to all that is put under Him; He will control and maintain all according to the will of God. Then also the church as the true Eve will be associated with Him in this position, as the fulness or complement of Him who fills all things. He is made Head over all things to the church which is His body. In His body He will display Himself, and fill the universe with the light and life of God, and so make the whole universe respond to what God is, in ceaseless praise. All will be maintained in unity and divine order. No evil will be allowed to disturb; all lawlessness will be removed, and God's will done on earth even as it is done in heaven. At the present time the church is being formed and fitted to fulfil its function in the coming day. Those who form it are being brought into the truth and enjoyment of sonship in Christ, according as God the Father chose us in Him before the world's foundation, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having marked us out beforehand for sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will. This involves reconciliation. You has He "reconciled in the body of his flesh through death", Col 1: 22. We are reconciled to God in Christ. Then we are brought into light of the sonship by the Spirit, so that we cry, Abba, Father. If the church is to be the vessel for the display of the light and life of God in the day of glory, it is necessary that those who compose it should be brought individually to the true knowledge of God revealed in the fullest way as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and made to live in His life that they may become capable of responding to the love of God.

What a great work this is to be carried on in creatures such as we are! How it displays the grace, wisdom and power of God! It is by divine teaching and discipline that this work is carried on in us, to bring into effect all that He has purposed, in Himself for His eternal satisfaction and glory. This One who in the past ages made Himself the servant of the will of God, saying, "Lo, I come ... to do thy will, O God", Heb 10: 7. He has undertaken to bring to pass all the will of God. The Father has committed all things into His hands, well knowing that nothing will fail. God has not entrusted anything of His will to any of the race of the first man, for everything which he committed to that man has always broken down from the beginning. The first man has proved to be an utter failure everywhere, and this has only made room for God to bring in the second Man - His resource from eternity. He is the true servant who could say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God", Ps 40: 8. He

came into the world as man, not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. In the gospel of John, which specially sets forth the glory of His Person, His Godhead glory, He constantly speaks of Himself as the “*sent one*”, and of the Father having committed all things into His hands.

His meat was to do His Father's will. He was ever working in communion with the Father, as He said: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”. At the time when everything outwardly was disorganised, when the cities in which He had done most of His mighty works had rejected His testimony, when as to the gathering of Israel He had to say, “I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain” (Isa 49), He could nevertheless rejoice in spirit and give thanks as He looked up to heaven and saw that the Father was pursuing uninterruptedly His way, doing just what He willed to do, hiding His things from the wise and prudent and revealing them to babes, and the Son could say, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight”. Nothing disturbed His rest and joy. And so it would be with us: we should always have peace and joy if we took His yoke upon us and sought nothing but the will of God, and had faith to look up to see God ever going on His way without any halting, and in spite of all evil in Satan and man, just doing His own will.

Again, when He had to face all the unspeakable bitterness of death, when Satan pressed all this upon His spirit in order to turn Him aside from the path of obedience, He prayed: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless *not as I will, but as thou wilt*”, Matt 26: 39. He was obedient unto death even the death of the cross. There He laid the righteous basis on which all the will of God will be accomplished. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame. The joy that was set before Him was that of giving effect to the will of God. And now that He has gone on high to the place of authority and power, He is still carrying on the work by which He is giving effect to the will of God. “Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast *given* him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him”, John 17: 1, 2. We are committed into the hands of the Son that He may give effect to the Father's will in each one, giving us eternal life now, and bringing us to the Father in glory as sons conformed to His own image.

God's will for us is that we should be delivered from the present evil world, Gal 1: 4. It is not God's will at the present time to improve or

set in order this world, but to deliver His people from it. It is important to see this, because so many of God's people are occupied in seeking to set in order and to improve the world. This is not according to the will of God. God is *taking out* a people for Himself. By the will of God we have been sanctified (set apart) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once, Heb 10: 10. Set apart from our sinful condition as natural men, and from our former associations in this world by the death of Christ. It is not the will of God to improve man in the flesh, but to set us apart from it; yet how much of the religious activity of the present day has as its object the improvement of the natural man, to make him fit for God and capable of serving Him, and to make him a better citizen of this world. All this is *not* according to the will of God. As of old God called Abraham out from his country, kindred and father's house, so for us the call is to come out from among them to be separate, 2 Cor 6: 17. Instead of improving the natural man God's present work is to form a new generation after the pattern of the second Man, a sanctified company of the same order and character as the Sanctifier - that is, Christ, Heb 2: 11.

God has predestinated us to sonship according to the good pleasure of *His* will, Eph 1: 5. It is only in the enjoyment of eternal life, which for us is the life of sonship, that we can worship God acceptably. "The Father seeketh *such* to worship him", John 4: 23. Angels worship Him as His servants. But the worship of servants does not satisfy the heart of God, it does not answer to what God is; only those who know His love can worship in spirit and *in truth*. Only sons can worship the Father according to what He seeks. Hence the will of God is that we should know sonship experimentally, Gal 4: 6. He has given us this privilege and sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father, that is, that there should be response to Him revealed as Father. In the Lord's dealings with the woman of Samaria (John 4), He was seeking to bring her into the light of God revealed as Father, and to make her capable of responding to that revelation, so that she might become a true worshipper of the Father, and in so doing He was giving effect to the will of Him who had sent Him.

This is His work in each one whom He receives as drawn to Him of the Father, John 6: 38, 39. This involves our being born again, our appreciation of His death as the uplifted Son of man, coming to Him, receiving the Spirit, and our being taught of Him. In coming to Him, He not only teaches us, but He makes the truth living and effectual in our

souls, so that we have things not in doctrine only, but in life and power, we become responsive to the love of God, an answer is produced in us to what He has revealed of the Father. He finds His delight and satisfaction in thus giving effect to the Father's will in those who come to Him. He carries on this work until we are raised up in the last day, raised up in glory, and presented before the Father conformed to His own image. It will be His joy to present us thus before the Father in glory. Thus the will of the Father will be accomplished in the myriads whom the Father is teaching and drawing to Him in this present day. It is His joy even now to bring us in spirit to the Father, so that we can worship Him in spirit and in truth, to have a company so one with Himself in life and relationship that He can in the midst sing praises to the Father, a company made partakers of His peace and His joy, so that we can sing His praises. What joy it is to the Son of God to sing praises to the Father in the midst of such a company on the platform of resurrection! Nor will His work and joy be complete until, as we have said at the beginning, He shall have banished sin from the creation of God, and filled heaven and earth with His praise.

Thou wilt arise and with Thy beams
Chase ev'ry grief away!

Then the wide earth, in glad response
To the bright world above,
Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy,
In memory of Thy love.

May God grant to us that we may be filled with the knowledge of His will, so that there may be real exercise to answer to it, so that we may walk worthily of the Lord (Col 1: 9), that we may know how to pray (1 John 5: 14), and that we may live the rest of our time to the will of God (1 Pet 4: 2), and prove how good and acceptable His will is, Rom 12: 2.

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(This article will be included, with more than a hundred others, in a book of ministry by this author to be published shortly - 'Fundamentals of Christianity and Other Articles.)