

## THE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL

This is the third volume from Geoffrey Bingham's hand on the theme of the Father and His Family.

The former two books, *I LOVE THE FATHER*, and *FATHER! MY FATHER!* deal warmly with God as Father, and man as His son.

This volume is really more concentrated on an overview of the teaching of the Bible on God's Fatherhood, the family of man, and the way in which the Son and the Holy Spirit reveal the truth that is at the heart of all the universe—namely, man's great need for true Fatherhood.

The materials of this book were used as a basic text for a Bible School Course. Since then the demand has been such that a better printing has become necessary.

It is true that you will use this book as a study volume, but that does not mean it is heavy or complicated. It is simply Biblical. It can be read by all.

It would be a pity to miss the author's insights.



**new creation publications**



**The GOD and  
FATHER  
of us all**

**Geoffrey Bingham**

## **THE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL**

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By The Same Author  
Geoffrey Bingham

Ah, Strong, Strong Love  
Angry Heart or Tranquil Mind  
Oh Father! Our Father!  
The Profound Mystery  
The Things We Firmly Believe  
The Wisdom of God and the Healing of Man

# **THE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL**

Geoffrey Bingham

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## FOREWORD

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This book, *THE GOD AND FATHER OF US ALL*, is in fact a series of studies originally given as sixteen lectures at a Bible School. Since then there has been a regular demand for the printed notes. The lectures were recorded and are available for those who wish to use them along with their reading.

That the subject is important is not to be doubted. Throughout Australia and in a number of countries overseas I have seen the vital impact of the truth of the Fatherhood of God. In many cases the result of teaching this subject has been little short of startling. This must be so since the principle of Fatherhood and authority are closely linked. Man has a problem with authority, but when he understands the love of the Father and comes as a son to the Father he is then liberated from his former views concerning authority.

The first chapter explains some of the causes of neglect of this important subject. Whatever they may be, we need to come to understand the nature of the Triune God. We need to understand the relational nature of the Persons of the Godhead, the nature of our relationships with the Triune God, and our relationships with one another.

Only by knowing the Fatherhood, the Sonship, and the Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son can we come to personal fulfilment as human beings.

Because of this we are glad to commend this small volume. May it help us to a deeper understanding of 'the God and Father of us all'.

*Geoffrey Bingham,  
Coromandel, July 1982.*

## CHAPTER ONE

---

### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

#### Introduction: The Fact of The Father

By the time of the writing of the N .T. epistles the fact of God being the Father of His people is established. All the Pauline epistles have the salutation 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father'. Some of them speak of 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. Other epistles either have equivalent statements, or teach the Fatherhood of God of His people. In fact a miracle has happened. There is a people of God, a people who are the household of God.

As we will see, this concept of the Covenant– Father is in the O.T. especially in relation to Israel. There must be a people of God, His elect, and in the O.T. this is Israel, and in the N.T. it is the true Israel of God and this includes some who were formerly Gentiles. To be a person of faith is at once to be a child of Abraham and a child of God (Galatians 3). In the Book of the Revelation mankind bears either the mark of the Beast or the mark of God. In Revelation 14:1 this is the name of the Father. All who overcome are sons (Rev. 21:7) and to them God is Father. They receive His name (Rev. 3:12).

We conclude that basic Christian teaching is that God is the Father of His people, and they are His children. Whilst this is accepted teaching for the church, it took millenniums for this teaching to come through, as such. When, then, did God become the Father of His people? What does the statement 'Father' really mean?

### A Needed Principle of Interpretation

When in the N. T. the idea of God as Father is accepted we have to ask the question, ‘Did God become Father to a people from the time of the Gospels onward, or was He ever Father?’ In other words, ‘Is He essentially Father, and has He always been so? Is it simply that a full revelation has come late in history, ie. the revelation of this Fatherhood?’ If we view the Scriptures as an entity, having an integrating unity, then it is permissible for us to see the gradual unfolding of certain elements of revelation, ie. ‘progressive revelation’. However we must not see God as in any sense developing or progressing. Because a certain element of revelation is received late in time does not mean it becomes a truth at that point, but simply that its truth is revealed at that time.

### The Whole Subject of God’s Fatherhood

#### (i) Pateriology

In theology there are two disciplines (amongst many), Christology and Pneumatology, ie. the person and work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. There is no discipline named as such ‘Pateriology’ or, the Person and Work of the Father. This is by nature of the case. We tend to speak of God and His Son and His Holy Spirit. The ancient creeds speak of ‘three Persons and one God’, and we tend to think of God as the Father, and not to divide Him into three persons. Hence Pateriology does not take on as a discipline. Nevertheless it is legitimate to speak of the Person and work of the Father. To speak of the Father is necessarily to speak of the Son, as to speak of the Holy Spirit who is also called ‘the Spirit of His Son’, and ‘the Spirit of your Father’ (Gal. 4:4–6, Matt. 10:20). In order to understand the Son we must under-

stand the Father, and the Spirit. And so on, with each member of the Godhead. Because we have no true analogy we cannot understand God from analogy, however much that principle may help. Hence true Fatherhood, Sonship and Spirithood must be understood by revelation (cf. I Corinthians 2:12–14). Only by understanding the three Persons can we understand the Godhead, and vice-versa.

#### (ii) Ways Of–Seeing the Fatherhood

(a) *The Eternal Nature of the Son Presupposes the Eternal Fatherhood.*

See Hebrews 1:1–3, John 17:5, 24. Other references to the Son being with the Father before time, as Col. 1:15f, John 1:1–3, and inferred in Phil. 2: 5f, I Cor. 8:6, II Cor. 8:9, and 50 on.

(b) *The Scriptural Statements Concerning God’ Being as Father.*

These are many. *In the O. T.*, as we shall see, God is particularly Father to His covenant people, and they are corporately His son, and individually are sons or children of His Fatherhood (cf. Exod. 4:22, Deut. 14:1, etc.)

*In the N. T.* we find many references to His Fatherhood. He is the Father of His Son, and of His people. Again His people are contained within His Son as the Son. They are ‘in Christ’. *In the Sermon on the Mount* those addressed as children of God are those who have submitted to the King of the Kingdom who is at the same time Father of His people. Nevertheless (Matt. 5:43–48) God is not partial towards His children. He treats all as He treats His true children.

*In the Gospels* Jesus is represented uniquely as the Son of the Father. In this sense, as we have pointed out, Christ’s eternal Sonship points to the

nature of God as Father before He created. However, Christ invites men to come to God as Father (cf. John 1:14, 18, 14:6, cf. Matt. 11:27).

*In the Epistles* the fact of God's Fatherhood is established. It is not only Fatherhood to the (unique) Son, but to all men of faith. Men of faith are the children of Abraham, and the children of Abraham are the (true) children of God, as we see in Galatians 3 and Romans 4. Ephes. 3:14–15 and 4:6 shows that all familyhood derives from God's Fatherhood, and that that Fatherhood is above and in and through all.

*(c) Throughout Scripture God is the Father of His People.*

In Ephes. 1:3–7 (cf. I Cor. 2:6ff) we see God's plan is to make men and women to be the children of God *through Christ*. The people of God in the O.T. and the N.T. are really the one people. 'Old Israel' of truth, and 'new Israel' of truth, constitute 'the true Israel of God'. A comparison of Exodus 19:5–6 and I Peter 2:9–10 shows this. Yet the children of the Kingdom (God is Father and King) are the children of God. Finally God's being as Father is shown in the fullness of His household or family. Cf. Ephes. 2:19ff, Hebrews 3:6, etc. We have seen that the true people of God have His name written upon them. The ultimate redeemed are the total family of the Father.

### **Conclusion: The Significance of Fatherhood**

Familyhood presupposes Fatherhood, or vice versa. We will need to discover what is *essential Fatherhood in order to* understand the true nature of the family or household of God. This should conduct us to helpful truths relating to human families and households and communities.

In order to understand true Fatherhood we need

to understand true Sonship. Both of these must come to us through revelation, and we understand that the Scriptures bring us such revelation with the aid of the Spirit. We of course must have submitted wills in order to understand.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ETERNAL CREATOR–FATHER

#### Introduction: Creator–Fatherhood

If we understand *the purpose of creation* then we understand why God created. Ephes. 1:3–14, I Cor. 2:6–14, cf. Isaiah 43:6–7, amongst other Scriptures show us that God planned to make men and women to be His children, and to glorify them as such. *Glorification* as such is the goal of God’s history: –

- (a) *He* glorifies Himself, ie. He reveals His glory in creation, grace and love, and does so by consummating all things in glory. He harmonises, unifies, and fills up (fills full) all things (cf. Ephes. 1:9–10, Col. 1:21, Ephes. 4:10).
- (b) He glorifies His universe, ie. He ‘eternalises’ In perfection that which He has created. He does this by redemption which includes the full restoration and maturation of that which He has created.

We are faced with two clear facts: – (a) God is Creator. (b) God is Father to His Son and His children. We now have to see how these two relate or are the one.

#### (a) God is Creator

The Scriptures have a clear doctrine of creation. Hebrews 11:3 states, ‘By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear’. Creation is ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31,

I Tim. 4:4, 6:17), which means that it is functionally harmonious and purposive. Eccles. 3:11 speaks of the harmonic nature of created things (cf. Psalm 104), whilst Proverbs 16:4 says everything is created for a purpose (cf. Rev. 4:11, Romans 11:36). Ephesian 3:9 undoubtedly *connects the plan and purpose of God with creation*.

#### (b) God is Father to His Son and His Children

In Hebrews 1:1–3 we see that the Father created through the Son (cf. John 1:1–3, Col. 1:15–17, I Cor. 8:6). This makes creation a *Father–Son operation*. That is, creation emerges from the action of the Father and the Son (cf. I Cor. 8:6). In a sense we can see both Paternal and Filial structuring of creation. In fact such passages as John 17:5 and 24 show us that *before creation* God had planned what would happen in and by creation. In this we would have to include redemption. That God is ‘the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ’ is true not only of his humanity but of the Son’s eternal deity also.

Luke 3:38 says, ‘Adam was the son of God’. Doubtless this refers to his created origin. Likewise in Acts 17:24–28 Paul clearly defines the Creatorhood of God and aligns it with the Fatherhood of God. Some say that this is merely a reference to man’s origination, but such a statement begs the question. What kind of God (Creator) creates or originates? The answer is: One who from all eternity is Father, and who makes His Son the Mediator of creation *as Son* (Hebrews 1:2–3).

If we study Acts 17:24–28 closely we will see a number of important elements: –

- (i) God is good as Creator. He does not ask for gifts but gives to all things life and breath and everything.
- (ii) He creates all the nations through one man.

- (iii) He is purposive in that He arranges the times and seasons (cf. 14:15f) and geographical locations of the nations so that they will seek to relate to God.
- (iv) All men ‘live and move and have their being’ in God, whether they seek Him or not.
- (v) To live and move and have being in God is to be as His sons. That is – as over and against the gods – God is Father. The idols are empty.

At this point we should see that to make man in His own image (Gen. 1:26) is to make man unique amongst the creatures of creation. He alone has affinity with God, and in this sense he is a child of the Father. This is the point that Paul makes in Acts 17. He is saying, ‘It is incongruous for man to worship idols since the true God is Father, giving life to and providing for His children.’

This Creator–Father link is clearly shown in the Sermon on the Mount, which we will later examine. In this the Father provides for His children, knowing their needs. Also He will have them all be as Himself in reconciliation and loving provision for others (Matt. 5:9, 43–48).

On all these grounds, then, we must link the Creator’s work with His Fatherhood. Simply because His Fatherhood has come later in time as a revelation, and a revelation of some brilliance, does not mean that we should relegate His Fatherhood to that period in time. He was Father before He created, and so, in some sense, *must have created as Father*. This thought is reinforced by the fact that He created ‘through a Son’ (Heb. 1:2–3, I Cor. 8:6). In a sense creation was a familial act. It is normal to human fatherhood to have (a) Procreation, (b) A ministry of providence and even (c) Redemptive ministry where it is required be– cause of waywardness

### Creation, Redemption, and Fatherhood

It is axiomatic of good (normal) fatherhood that the father desires the maturation of his children. This is his true father–goal. We have already said that this is the purpose of God’s creation – the glorification (perfection maturation) of His children. It is self–evident that redemption is needed, in creation, because of man’s rejection of that plan of God and his own rebellion. Without redemption man cannot know and come under the true Fatherhood of God.

We can sketch, then, the pattern of *salvation–history*, ie. the plan and purpose of God. It is clear that redemption was planned *before time*. God does not fail in creation. Redemption heals the breach man has made and restores him so that he may reach that maturation (glorification planned for him. Also the Scriptures reveal that the prophets have been ‘from eternity’, ie. ‘since the world began (cf. Luke 1:70, Acts 3:21, cf. Rev. 10:7)’. That means God’s plan (Ephes. 3:9, cf. Romans 16:25–26) always envisaged that creation and redemption should be, so to speak, ‘in the one bundle’.

This leads us then to the whole theme, in time, of ‘the people of God’.\* We can trace ‘the sons of God’ from Genesis 4:25ff, 6:2f. However it is when the covenant with Abraham is made that ‘children of God’ comes into prominence as a theme, and in fact continues as such to the end of time. It takes a number of forms but works on the principle that men of faith are the children of Abraham and so the children of God. When, in eternity we see ‘a multitude so that no man can number it’ this is surely the people or the household of God.

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\* For amplification of this theme see LFS. 34, *The People of God: The True Community*. By G.C. Bingham (NCPI 1979).

It means that from Abel through to Abraham, and Abraham to Israel and to Christ, and from Christ's ascension to the end (the *telos*) God has been doing His work as Father. In our next study we will see this in particular in the O. T., and later we will see it in the N. T., but our point is that God has always Fathered His true people (ie. His sons and daughters), whilst those who have moved outside His Fatherhood have deprived themselves of their true being as created children.

### **Conclusion: Creatorhood and Fatherhood are The One**

It is obvious that God is Creator, Father and Redeemer. However, when it is thought out the three are virtually the one, or three integrated aspects of the one Person. What God creates He will care for, and redeem, where necessary. This is because He is the God of all grace. Human fathers should be, where needed, redeemers. This is part of their fatherhood, and not something distinct from it. At the very least God's redemption is restoration of His creation. At best it is bringing that creation to maturation. This, in any case, was planned for it.

When we are rid of merely sentimental and emotional ideas of fatherhood, we will see that fatherhood embraces more than merely procreation. Hence in God's case it embraces more than creation, or, rather, embraces within that creation the plan for providence and the ultimate perfection of that which has been created. This we understand to be true Fatherhood. All earthly fatherhood should embrace the same, in principle. Such always has the family or household in mind.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

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### **GOD'S FATHERHOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

#### **Introduction: Analogy or Fact?**

God is likened to many things in the O. T. such as a father (Psalm 103:13), or a husband (Jer.3:20), but is God like a Father or is He truly Father, and not even a Father, ie. one amongst many? We have already seen that children of faith are children of Abraham and children of God. If this is the historic order for men then it follows that all who have faith in God are His children, and He Is their Father.

In Genesis 4 we have the account of Cain and Abel. I John 3:10ff makes it clear that Cain, in fact, was a child of the evil one (cf. John 8:44). Abel was a child of God. Genesis 4:25–26 makes it clear that Seth was the substitute for Abel. He, too, was a child of God. Related to Seth and his son Enosh men begin to 'call upon the name of the Lord'. We assume then that the 'sons of God' are those who call on the Lord. Genesis 6:1 speaks of a sad deterioration, an unequal yoke.

From the N.T. where the only name for God is 'Father' we assume that it is from God's Fatherhood that man has the right to be a true child or son. If God is only 'like a father' then man is only 'like a son'. He has no *essential* relationship with God as Father. He is only treated as a son. At best he is a creature of the creation, and if redeemed, a new creature. Even then God must be 'like a Father' to him. It is not actual sonship he has but metaphorical son ship – whatever that could be!

## God The Father of His People

### (i) From Adam to Abraham

The order is then:

(a) Adam is the son of God (Luke 3:38). (b) Abel is a son of God (I John 3:10). (c) Seth is the substitute for Abel, and so is a son of God. Likewise the children of Seth who call upon the name of the Lord. (d) These sons marry 'the daughters of men', possibly the line of Cain, from which results a disastrous and unequally yoked union (cf. II Cor. 6:14ff). Following the violence and corruption upon the earth mankind is judged in the flood. From Noah come the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham, or rather his son Canaan, is cursed. Shem and Japheth are blessed. From Shem comes Terah, and from Terah, Abraham.

### (ii) Abraham to Jacob

The *Abrahamic covenant* is universal in nature affecting all the nations of the earth. It is also particular in nature in that Abraham is to be the father of a great nation, and father of many nations (Gen. 12:1–3, 17:5, etc.). We have seen from Galatians 3 that the children of Abraham who are truly his children are men of faith, ie. faith in God. Abraham is a man of faith (cf. Hebrews, 11:8ff, 17ff, Gen. 15:6). As such he is a human spiritual father to many. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The covenant is particularised as a covenant of law for the children of Israel (Jacob).

We are now in a position to see God as the Covenant–Father of Israel.

### (iii) Israel and the Covenant–Father

#### (a) *The Sons and the Son*

Later we will see another element we have neglected to

this point, that is that God is King over all the earth. He is King of all nations, and His Kingdom is first His by creation, and then by His powerful rule over all creation. It was known that the true king was the true father of his people. No less God. However, Israel was chosen to be His special people, and He was Father and King to them, and they recognised their entity as a nation as being that created by God.

Deut. 32:6 (uttered by Moses) says, 'Do you thus requite the Lord, you foolish people? Is he not your Father who created you?' This accords with Deut. 7:6, 'For you are a people holy to the Lord your God: the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth'. In this regard see Exodus 19:5. Peter in his first epistle (1:14–17) makes a commentary on this, that the Father is holy and the children were expected to be holy also.

In Deut. 14:1, 'You are the sons of the Lord your God ... for you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth'.

In Exodus 4:22 God says, 'Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you (Pharaoh), "Let my son go that he may serve me".' In Hosea 11:1 God says, 'When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt have I called my son.' In both these cases the corporate people – as an entity – constitute the son of God.

The rebellion of Israel, then, is the rebellion of covenant – children against their covenant – Father. If they were not His people, ie. His household, then their rebellion would not be so reprehensible. In Numbers 12:7 God says, '... my servant Moses ... is entrusted with *all my house*.' This means household and is the figure for the whole people under their patriarchal king. Later (see Hebrews 3:1–6) Moses is said to

be servant in the house and the Son to be the Son who is over the house, under the Father (cf. John 8:34–36).

In Jeremiah 3 this rebellion is outlined under the principle of Father and children. It needs, however, to be understood by the use of Jer. 2:26–27 (and context) ‘As a thief is shamed when caught so the house of Israel shall be shamed; they, their kings, their princes, their priests and the prophets, who say to a tree, "You are my father," and to a stone, "You gave me birth."’ This is probably the passage Paul had in mind when he was speaking of idolatry to the Athenians (Acts 17:24–30). In Jeremiah 3:4 God asks, ‘Have you not just now called to me, "My Father, thou art the friend of my youth – .."’. In verse 14 God cries, "'Return, O faithless children" says the Lord, "for I am your master"’. Later (verse 19) God says, ‘I thought how I would set you among my sons ... and I thought you would call me, "My Father," and would not turn from following me’. He adjures them (verse 22), ‘Return, O faithless sons, and I will heal your faithlessness’.

The idea of the Father being the Master (Jer. 3:14) is repeated in Malachi 1:6, ‘A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honour?’ The link with covenant is shown in Malachi 2:10, ‘Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?’ The first word ‘father’ here could possibly refer to Jacob, but probably does not, being a parallelism with ‘God created us’. This idea is carried through in Isaiah 64:8, ‘Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay and thou art the potter; we are all the works of thy hands.’

The tragedy of the exile is shown in Isaiah 63 where Israel is desolate. Yet it is on the basis of the very nature of God, especially as Father that

the prophet cries out for his people, ‘Look down from heaven and see, from thy holy and glorious habitation. Where are thy zeal and thy might? The yearning of thy heart and thy compassion are withheld from me. For thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us, and Israel does not acknowledge us; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from eternity Is thy name.’ Here Israel sees God as being essentially Father to the people, and also sees, with that Fatherhood, God as Redeemer, and always Redeemer, as though that, too, were part of Fatherhood.

### **(b) Revelation of Fatherhood**

Having seen many of the references to the Son, and the sons, and seeing them all connected with Israel, what was the view Israel had of God? It had a view of Him as King, and so as King–Father. It recognised His right over the nation because He had chosen it and made it a theocracy. In the Kingdom the children must obey the Father–King. At the same time He had created them as (a) Men, and (b) As covenant people.

From another point of view we may say that Israel knew something of God as Father beyond that which was merely metaphorical. They expected no less of Him than of an earthly father, and much more. Likewise in their thinking, especially their prophetic thinking, begins to emerge the idea of a special Son. This is seen in such Psalms as 2 and 89, amongst others. In Psalm 2:7 the writer says ‘I will declare the decree of the Lord. He has said unto me, "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee."’ This Son is also the ‘anointed one’ and God calls him ‘my king’. Likewise in Psalm 89 David is the king, and God says (v.26) ‘He shall cry to me, "Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation".’ To this God says,...I will make him the first–born, the highest of the kings of the earth’.

In this sense, God having a special Son, who sometimes appears to be Israel, and sometimes Israel's Messiah, all goes to give a high view of God's Fatherhood. Nevertheless there are other considerations which we will later study. One of them is man's rebellion against God and his rejection of God as He is. This pictured in both Genesis 3 and Romans 1. No human being can clearly, fully see true fatherhood, let alone true Fatherhood, and doubtless knowing the first properly is dependent upon knowing the second adequately. Hence the Son of whom the psalmist and the prophets speak (cf. Isaiah 9:6 and Isaiah 42:1-2) must first come to truly reveal the Father. After all, the only Image of fatherhood men had was that of their own fathers. Abraham who lived close to God was the best human image of fatherhood, but It needed a direct revelation of Fatherhood from the one who was truly the Son of God. Adam had failed as a son, and for the most part *so* had Israel.

It awaited the coming of the true Son to bring full revelation. Less than full revelation was dangerous, even for a people such as Israel who had felt and known much of God's Fatherhood, both in providence, loving kindness and chastisement (cf. Hebrews 12:5-11 and Proverbs 3:11-12).

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### THE SON REVEALS THE FATHER—I

#### Introduction: Principle of Revelation

John 1:18 says, 'No man has seen God at any time. The Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him.' The O. T. principle was that no man could see God and live. Isaiah feared he had seen God and so was destroyed (Isaiah 6). Much of what seemed a direct relationship with God has been ascribed to a theophany, ie. a manifestation of God which is not a direct revelation of God. Hence Stephen and Paul both say the law was given by the intermediary angel.

In John 1:14 it is said that the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we beheld his glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. This is followed by saying that the law came by Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. The giving *of* the law was always regarded as an outstanding event. John in comparing law with grace and truth was not denigrating the giving of the law, but showing how high was the gift of grace and truth in the person of the Son who was revealing the Father as not being of law alone but of grace and truth. The Gospel writer is really saying that the Son by being directly related to the Father, was able to reveal Him as grace and truth.

In John's Gospel there is a principle of revelation. First one must be drawn to the Son, and then one may go through the Son to the Father. In fact Matt. 11:27 gives this principle, 'No one knows the Son save the Father, and no one knows

the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal him.’ Jesus means that just to look at the Son is not to know him, and one cannot know the Father unless the Son reveals Him. in John 6:44–46 Jesus says in principle, ‘No one can come to me unless the Father draws him.’ In other words, the initiative comes from the Father. He then says how the Father does this. The prophets say of the ones who will come, ‘They shall all be taught of God.’ Doubtless what the prophets have said is part of the Father’s way of teaching, and so, drawing those whom He will to the Son. We have already seen that the Psalms and the prophets were speaking of a special Son. Jesus adds in v.65, ‘That is Why I told you no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.’ The con- text shows that although many had come outwardly they had not come in will, and in fact when the Son spoke they rejected him, showing they had never truly come, ie. been drawn by the Father

Later In the Gospel (cf. John 14:25–26, 15:25– 26, 16:12–15) Jesus says that men will learn of him by and through the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit will draw them. Yet since the Spirit is sent by the Father, then again it is the Father drawing men by His Spirit. However the order is: – (a) The Father draws to the Son, and (b) The Son brings to the Father. In both cases the Spirit is resent and effectual.

### **The Modes of Revelation**

In our next study we will see the full revelation of the Father is in the events of the Cross and the Resurrection. However, the principle of John 14:10 is the true mode of revelation. ‘The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works’. This tallies with John 5:19–30, 6:57a, 8:28, and so on. Hence just as Matt. 5:16 says that the light

we let shine is the works we do, yet it is accredited to the Father in heaven, so it was with Jesus, with the added power that he related uniquely to the Father as the Son. Hence what he did revealed the Father in action.

### **(i) Revelation by Teaching**

Doubtless no man can speak truth but by the Spirit of truth, with Whom Jesus was anointed as Messiah. Yet Jesus was not anointed to counter a natural deceitfulness but rather to give positive teaching by the Spirit of truth. In Matthew’s Gospel this teaching concerning the Father comes through very clearly. Indeed a careful study should be made of the whole sermon on the mount

One of the basic statements is ‘your Father who is in heaven’, or, ‘your heavenly Father? This is meant to distinguish between the earthly fatherhood of which we know something, and the heavenly Fatherhood which transcends the earthly. Indeed one does not work from earthly father to the heavenly but rather the other way. In other places in the Gospels this difference is strongly underlined. In Matt. 5:9 reconciliation is a sign of sonship of that Fatherhood which reconciles. In 5:16 good works also point to the Father who inspires them. In 5:43–48 the heavenly Father of the true sons does not limit Himself in doing good only to the just and the good but also does good to the evil and unjust. This is His love. His sons must do likewise; they must love their enemies and do good to them that despitefully use them.

In Matt. 6 one can go into one’s room and pray to the Father. Likewise when one does good one does it unconsciously, yet nothing is missed by the Father who rewards His children. One prays to that very Father acknowledging His Kingdom, seeking (as a child should do with the father) to do His will. One expects care from Him, and being

sustained in the midst of evil. One is awakened to forgiveness by that of the Father. Likewise fasting is noted by the Father and rewarded. One does not have to worry about anything. The Father provides. This King of the Kingdom will provide all that is needed.

In Matt. 7 Jesus points out that earthly fathers know how to give good gifts, and not lust gifts. How much more does God know how to give good gifts to His children. He wants them to ask Him, to knock, and to seek, and He will respond. However those who call Messiah, 'Lord! Lord!' will not enter the Kingdom lust for the crying. It is those who do the will of the Father who enter the Kingdom.

In this kind of teaching Jesus portrays the nature of the Father, and invites those who are children to live in this climate, whilst those who are not children of the Father, i. e. children of Abraham (cf. Matt. 3:7–10, 8:11–12, 12:49–50) are invited to be shown the Father by the Son (Matt. 11:25–28).

### (ii) Revelation by Action

'The Father who dwells In me, he does his works'. This means that all that Jesus did was really what the Father was doing. We will see this more fully in our next study. It means then that when Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of God has come upon you,' that he meant, 'The Father–King working through His anointed Son–Messiah Is doing what He wills, as Father.' He meant the Kingly rule was making Itself active and manifest. In this sense men saw the Father. In the parable of the vineyard he taught that the King had sent His servants the prophets to His people to receive His due from them but they had killed the prophets. Finally He sends His Son, and they kill him. The users of the vineyard see the character of the Father In the Son,

and they reject it.

What we need to see was that teaching was action, as also action was teaching. Our ideas of teaching being the impartation, merely, of ideas, was not the case in the Gospels. Jesus taught y what he did, but what he taught was what he did. Hence the precepts given in the Sermon on the Mount constituted the way he lived. He had that relationship with the Father. So he exemplified as well as effected the things he taught. In this sense men saw the Father.

### Conclusion: To See The Son Is To See The Father

We might be forgiven for thinking that the more he said and did the less people seemed to see what he was about; the less they really saw the Father. In fact it was confronting people which precipitated his death. What they saw was what they would not accept. Hence he said, many times, 'He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.'

His presentation of the Father polarised the unresolved attitudes of his hearers. They could not remain undecided or neutral. He certainly revealed the Father but to those who did not wish to see the Father. When we realise how little God had been thought to be Father we can understand the brilliance of the revelation, and the rejection of the hearers. Not all, of course, rejected. They were the 'ones whom Thou hast given me'.



## CHAPTER FIVE

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### THE SON REVEALS THE FATHER—II

#### Introduction: The O.T. And Revelation

We have observed that in the O. T. something of God as Father is known, especially in a covenantal way. We have also seen that some predictions of a Son of God which make that one unique can be found. Psalms 2 and 89 are explicit enough. The thrust of Hosea 11:1 is resolved only in the N. T. and II Sam. 7:14 is puzzling since there is a reference to the possibility of disobedience in the (unique) son. However the deepest question lies in the fact that to know God as Father is to work from human fatherhood to divine Fatherhood which would be most dangerous. All else that is spoken of about God in His law, holiness, justice and wrath would distort the Image of God if approached from a human point of view. The Father would then be virtually demonic. On the other hand, to take the attributes of long-suffering, kindness and goodness would be to reduce the image to a benevolence without judgement and justice. It seems that the O. T. economy was not fitted to take a full revelation of the Fatherhood of God.

#### The N.T. And The Revelation of Fatherhood

We repeat that Fatherhood is a revelation. This takes it beyond simply analogical comparison and understanding. Whilst the term 'Son of God' is not a simple one to understand, the confession of Peter, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God' must at least have been a term intelligible to Peter.

Likewise the question of the high priest asking Jesus whether he was 'The Messiah the Son of God' means he had some concept of such a son. Nevertheless Jesus tells Peter that such a revelation is from the Father and could not be from man. He infers this regarding himself in Matt. 11:27, and in fact in Matt. 3:17 (at the baptism) it is the Father Himself who says, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' a statement virtually repeated to the three disciples at the Transfiguration. Revelation then, is from the Father.

#### Impediment To Revelation

This can be said to be twofold, and interactive.

- (i) The rejection of God by man is the rejection of His Fatherhood. In Romans:19–32 the rejection of Fatherhood is not explicit or apparent. However in Romans 1:19–20 Paul says (a) Men knew God. (b) They could know Him from creation. This knowledge covered His power and deity'. It is difficult to envisage power and deity without Fatherhood. Paul even affirms that man should know His Father-hood (Acts 17:28) from creation. Man then really rejects God as Father. Doubtless this relates to the principle of authority, and the desire for autonomy.
- (ii) The rejection of human fatherhood is basically the rejection of divine Fatherhood for the same reasons of refusal of authority and desire for autonomy. Hence the die is always set against understanding the principle of fatherhood, whether human or divine. Of course there is a human tension which results

from the loss of both, and man has come to regard this existential dimension of suffering as part of his natural experience.

### **The True Revelation Of The Father By The (True) Son**

We have already seen John's comparison of *law* on the one hand and *grace and truth on the other*. John 1:14–18 (to repeat ourselves) says, 'The Eternal Word (the Son) became flesh, and we saw Sonship personalised in him. He reflected the Father's glory, showing this glory to be (full of) grace and truth. We participators partook of that fullness (of grace and truth) so that we experienced grace upon grace. Thus the God whom no one has seen was declared by the life and action of the Son, the epitome of grace and truth'.

This principle is worked out In John's Gospel. Jesus continually emphasises both grace and truth. He speaks much concerning truth, but shows much concerning grace. However, it is what he does (as we have seen) which demonstrates the Father. Taking the verse John 14:10 as principal of this, we see the following: –

#### **(i) God's Glory as Father is Shown in the Grace and Truth of the Son**

If we trace the word 'glory' through this Gospel we see that It means that everything Jesus did was revealing the Father. In 2:11 we see that the disciples first behold his glory and *believe on him*. In 7:18 Jesus says that he who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of God is true. In 8:50 he says he does not seek his own glory, but infers that the Father seeks it for him. The climax comes in the raising of Lazarus. In 11:4 Jesus says that the

illness is primarily to glorify God and that it will also glorify the Son of God. He chides Martha by saying, 'Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?'

In 12:27–28 – the Gentiles having come to see him – Jesus asks the Father to glorify His name in the special hour to which he has come. The Father tells him that He has already glorified His (own) name, and will do it again. Presumably He means Jesus has glorified the Father's name to this point, and will yet (climactically)do so. This is borne out in 13:31–32 at the point when Judas goes out of the last supper in order to betray Jesus. Jesus says, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and in him God is glorified: if God Is glorified in him, God will also glorify him In himself, and glorify him at once.' This must mean that God accepts the Son as totally glorifying Himself. Thus the Son is glorified.

Further to this the chapter of John 17 speaks of such glorification. In 15:7–8 Jesus has said that for the disciples to trust and abide in the Son and bring forth fruit is to glorify the Father (the principle of Matt. 5:16). Now he says to the Father that he has glorified Him, but desires to have *all the* Father's glory given to him that he may fully glorify the Father. This must mean that by obedience he has – to this point – fully glorified the Father. However, the great event which wholly glorifies is the Cross. He requests the Father to give him the Father–glory (grace and truth) which will fully show the Father. The Cross, then, is that full action, demonstration and explication of grace and truth which (thus) shows the total glory of the Father.

Notice:– *Only if the Son operates in this obedience, thus reflecting the Father, can the Father be truly revealed.*

### (ii) God's True Fatherliness is Shown by the True Sonliness of the Son

To put it in other words: – Divine Fatherhood requires complete obedience by true sonship. This Jesus effected. From John 5:17 to 47 Jesus unfolds this principle. In verse 17 he says that the Father has always worked and that the Son works with Him. He implies the Son has ever, and will ever, work with Him. From v.19 following Jesus says the true son does whatever the father tells him, and that the true father loves the son and shows him everything he is doing. This rapport means the two work together. The (true) father is not jealous for his own accomplishment but rather rejoices when he can give all things over to his son (cf. John 3:35, Matt. 11:27). Hence when the son does a work he shows not himself but the father.

The Jews, of course, hate such statements. This kind of talking implies that 'I and the Father are one'. At the same time it shows sonship is subordinate to fatherhood. This man cannot tolerate. Yet this is not, *per se*, subordinationism, but the secret principle of love that he who would be greatest seeks to be least (Matt. 23:11–12), is anathema to the (fallen) human mind.

The Son did exactly what he said. He came not for his own glory but for that of the Father. Since, however (John 5:43–44), men were seeking their own glory they could not recognise this glory of serving and humility. Hence they rejected the messenger (the Son) and so they rejected the Father.

In John all of the acts of Christ, shown generally through his teaching and signs, are truth and grace, but primarily the grace and truth of the Father, so that anyone *reading* the signs and not *simply looking at them* would know Jesus to be the Messiah the Son of God (20:30–31).

### (iii) The Cross and Resurrection are the 'Greater Works' By which Fatherhood is shown

We have seen that Jesus speaks (John 17:4) of having glorified God on earth by the obedience he has rendered, but now anticipates a greater work by which he will totally glorify the Father. This is the Cross and the Resurrection. In John 5 he distinguishes between what he is currently doing, and something greater he will do. He says, 'For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing: but *greater works than these* will he show him, *that you may marvel*. Under the Spirit at Pentecost they were to marvel, but mainly at the great works of the Cross and Resurrection.

In his ministry (in this Gospel) Jesus refers to those who follow him as disciples. Later he says they are his friends (15:15). In 17:20ff he desires a deep intimacy for them with himself and the Father. In 20:17 (cf. Matt. 28:10) he now calls them 'brethren' and speaks of 'your Father and my Father: your God and my God'. Doubtless the 'greater works' of the Cross and Resurrection have brought them to (a) Sonship and (b) Brother–hood with him and themselves. In these ways, then, the Son reveals the Father.

### Conclusion: Time for Revelation

True Fatherhood may now be Comprehended but only because the actual and true Son of the eternal Father has appeared. It is axiomatic that in no other way could true Fatherhood be revealed. Since true (human) fatherhood derives from this source, so now can human fatherhood be under–stood, accepted and obeyed. By relationship with the Father it now transcends what it was when deriving from its own (human) source.

## CHAPTER SIX

### GOD'S FATHERHOOD AND THE SON'S SONSHIP

#### Introduction: The Two Always Working Together

In John 5:17 Jesus says, 'My Father is working still, and I am working.' He meant two things: –

- (a) God never ceased from working even though He rested from the work of creation.
- (b) The Son has ever worked with him and still is.

The Jews believed God had rested. They did not believe a Son had worked with Him (cf. Heb. 1:2–3). This would mean Jesus was God (John 5:18).

The principle of the Father and the Son working together is the true, though simple revelation of true fatherhood and true sonship. Doubtless it is reflected – even if faintly – in other father–son relationships, but only in the Father and the Son has it been shown totally.

#### 'My Beloved Son In Whom I Am Well Pleased'

This statement of Matt. 3:17 and virtually repeated at the Transfiguration (cf. Matt. 17:5) is believed to be, in addition to being a direct revelation, a conflation of Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. Whilst the Word was always the Son, yet the Son was not flesh from the beginning. He became flesh through Mary and the Holy Spirit. Divine Son ship now works out in human operations and human

ways. However, the Messiah and the Son are one (cf. Matt. 16:16, 26:63). The Son as man is now moving through the human sphere and effects the Father's will.

Adam (Luke 3:38) was the son of God who defected. Israel was made to be the son of God (Exod. 4:22, Hosea 11:1), but failed to show that obedience later evidenced by the true Son. Hence Hosea 11:1 is now applied to Jesus (Matt. 2:14f). Israel collectively was Son. Now the true people of God are collectively in the Son (Gal. 3:26–29). Being baptised into Christ is putting him on, becoming sons, and becoming one. Hence the sons of God, those who believe on Christ as the way to the Father, are incorporated into the Son. He is at once the head and the community, so that they have their true personal and corporate being in him, the Son.

God is pleased in His Son, not merely because the Son is obedient. Right and proper as that is, it is not the goal of incarnation. He becomes man in order to fulfil the will of the Father which needs to be accomplished at this point of history, that is the defeat of all evil powers (I John 3:8, Heb.2:14–15) and the redemption of mankind. God is pleased with this Son, and He anoints him for the task of being Messiah and ushering in the Kingdom.

#### The Father Loves The Son And Gives All Things Into His Hand

The Son, the Word–become–flesh, is to accomplish for man what the Father wishes to be done. The Son then is given all authority for the task (John 3:35, Matt. 11:27), and is also commanded to do it, so that the initiative for the work is from the Father. The Son is loved by the Father for doing the work (John 10:17,) but then the Son also loves the Father and is glad to obey His command (John 14:30–31).

What we must see, however, is that the Son does not commence his work following his baptism. Before the foundation of the world he was given glory by the Father (John 17:5, 24), and it was planned that he should be the mediator of creation (Col. 1:15–17, I Cor. 8:6, John 1:1–3). I Cor.8:6 makes it clear that he was mediator in creating all things. He is Lord, even, before he wins Lord – ship as man, through his life, death and resurrection. We have seen from John 5:17ff that he has always worked with the Father, and this no less in his incarnation than in his operations prior to that time.

In the gospels we see the declaration of his Messianic Sonship, and the anointing for– the same gives him Special authority. He is Lord– of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), and has authority *to* forgive s., (Matt. 9:6). When it is said that all things are given into his’ hands, this has deep significance. It means that as men may come to God (the Father) so they may come to him, the Son. In its context it means he gives life in the Spirit. In John 14:1 Jesus said that for one to believe in God it is right and logical to believe also in him, the Son. Since the Father has not given the Spirit to him by measure (John 3:34) then he has all things (3:35, cf. Matt. 11:27). In John 13:3 It is written, ‘Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things Into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God ...’ This means that Jesus knew the Father had given him authority to accomplish His will In the human scene (cf. Luke 10:22, John 17:4, 5:21–36, 12:49).

### **Authority Gained By The Cross and Resurrection**

In Matt. 28:18–20 Jesus says, ‘All authority is given unto me’. He means that the delegated authority he exercised prior to the Cross is now sealed

and fixed by the triumph of the saving event of the Cross– Resurrection. Hence in the N.T. it is said time and again that God has raised him up above every principality and dominion and power, and given him a name which is above every name. He has made him to be head over all things, not only in this age (aeon) but over the coming age also. The O.T. Scriptures of Psalm 2 and 110 are quoted many times of him, especially in the letter to the Hebrews showing that he is seated at the right hand of God.

This authority is exercised by a Man. We do not mean that the Son does not have deity. We mean that his victory took place in the time of his earthly humanity. Hence having glorified the Father in and by his incarnation, and having worked with him in the work of salvation, *he goes on working as the Son*, right up to the consummation of the age. He still delights to do the Father’s will.

I Cor. 15:24–28 shows him working out that authority in putting down every rebellious authority. Revelation 5 shows him as the victorious Lion of the Tribe of Judah, yet also as the Lamb that has been slain, who conquers in the out working of history. He is the one who loosens the seals, who has the trumpets blown, the vials of judgement poured out, and in the latter chapters he is proclaimed twice as ‘King of kings and Lord of lords’, and seated on his white horse goes out to defeat and judge all evil. At the same time he is in the midst of the Throne and is often said to have conquered (Rev. 3:21, 12:10, 19:11ff, etc.).

Although this is not our study we should see that the Son, as he works, works by his church, his people, the people gathered in him to make the Son ship of God. Perhaps the greatest proof of the defeat of Satan is that those who were once Satan’s slaves (I John 5:19, Ephes. 2:1–2) are now opposing him, and in love serve the Father, in the Son.

### The Culminating Work Of The Father And The Son

The Father and the Son (with the Agent the Holy Spirit, the creative Spirit of life) work in the work of creation. They work together in the work of redemption, and they work in time between the ascension and the eschaton, the end-time. They work to restore the creation which has been affected by the rebellion of Satan and his powers, and by man who has rejected God.

At the end of time every knee bows, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, but they do this 'to the glory of the Father'. When every authority has been placed under the feet of the Son he turns and gives the Kingdom to the Father that 'God may be all in all'.

### Conclusion: The Father and The Son Are One

The beautiful statements of John 14:10a, 17:21, 23 that the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father defy understanding along the lines of (fallen) human thinking. Such unity is not seen in this measure in human father-son relationships. Hence our inability to understand. Yet it is shown that at the end God will unify all creation in the Son (Ephes. 1:9-10) and will fill these things up (ie. what is vanity and emptiness will experience the fullness - *pleroma* - of Christ) as it is seen in Ephes. 1:23, 4:10. He will also harmonise (reconcile) all things through Christ's Cross (Col. 1:19-22, cf. Col. 3:13).

This from before creation, through creation, by redemption, and the ultimate work of restoration the Father-Son ministry ever operates, aided by the Spirit of life and renewal. The oneness is not only in some high relationship but in the practical work of obedience and cooperation.

Thus the true Person of the Father, as also His

work becomes known. Without the Son we would not see this as the Father-work.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### GOD'S FATHERHOOD AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

#### Introduction: God Is Father To Men

The Fatherhood of the Son is unique, and must be revealed by one or other of these two Persons. The sharing or provision of that Fatherhood for men both by creation and redemption is the most brilliant fact of the Christian faith. The high-water mark of human experience is seen in Gal. 4:4–6 where first we see God providing redemption, and then sonship

- (a) By the work of the Son and
- (b) By the presence of the Spirit. Man cries, 'Abba! Father!' to God.

John 14:6 speaks of coming to the Father by the Son. We need to pursue this theme a little more so that speaking of the household of God will be congruent with the truth that men are sons of the living God. That God is Father is a theme seen in the O. T. Arguing *back* from Luke 3:38 and Acts 17:28 many see that God is Father as Creator, or as Creator He is Father. This may well be implied in Isaiah 63:16, 64:8 and similar passages, although they refer to Israel in their setting. However, when it comes to the community, then without doubt God is Father, and not, merely, like a father. Recent researches into this area have shown that Israel recognised the Fatherhood of God, although they awaited a more brilliant revelation, naturally, in and through the person of His Son. Paul says (Rom. 9:4), 'To Israel belonged ... the sonship'. Israel was corporately *a* son of God (Exodus 4:22, Hosea 11:1, etc.) but also all Israel were *the* children of God (Deut. 14:1, 32:6, cf. Jer. 3:4, 14, 22).

The New Testament reveals God clearly as –Father in a universal way, but not In a Universalistic manner. It has been said, 'God is the Father of all men (origination) but not all men are the children of God'. This is because in the Fall they abdicated their true-relationship with God. To be in His image and likeness is for many scholars to be a son of the Father. However, it is *in Christ* (not Adam) that full sonship was planned (Ephesians 1:3–7, 1 Cor. 2:8–10, cf. Romans 8:30, I John 3:1–3). Such become sons *in the fullness of time*. See Galatians 4:4–6.

Unless we understand the Significance of God's Fatherhood as revealed by Christ we might even miss the whole point of the N.T. John 1:14, 18, 14:1–10, Matt. 11:27 tell us that *God is Father*. In the O.T. the word 'God' was not a name for God. God's only *name* was YAHWEH Exodus 3:13–18 expounds the name as 'I AM WHO I AM', ie. 'I AM'. Jesus says in his high-priestly prayer, 'I have manifested *thy name to the men whom thou gavest me*', and, 'I made known to them *thy name, and I will make it known*'. He gave only one name, that of 'Father'. Doubtless this was not simply the word 'Father', but also all that it means – Its nature, action, and so on. He had said, 'He that has seen me has seen the Father'. He says, 'I kept them *in thy name*', and 'Keep them *in thy name*' (John 17:6, 26, 12, 11). This revelation of God –as Father must mean that when we look at the figures (or, homologies) of household and family, then we must understand them in the light of his Fatherhood, as also Messiah in the light of his Son-ship. Thus when Jesus says (John 8:35), 'The slave does not continue in the *house* forever; the Son continues forever, so if the Son shall make you free you shall be free indeed', then that freedom is related to *house* or household. When he says, 'In my Father's *house* are many dwelling places', he must again be alluding to the domestic household

of God. In the light of these matters we may now look at the household of God.

### The Household Of God

In the LXX and the N.T. the words *oikos* and *oikia*, which are virtually synonymous, are used in the following contexts: –

- (a) *For buildings such as a house, the temple, and a palace.* The temple can be called ‘the house of God’, or, ‘the house of the Lord’. This was so when the house of the Lord was in fact a tent (tabernacle). The tent of course was normally where the family dwelt. This is seen in Acts 15:16, ‘I will rebuild the dwelling (tent) of David’. A tent is as much a house as is a solid building. Israel looked upon the temple as the house of the Lord but also, symbolically its own house.
- (b) *That family which Constitutes all under the one roof, tent, house, habitation.* There is no word for the modern ‘nuclear family’ in either the Hebrew or the Greek. The term ‘household’ is used to cover all who dwell together, ie. more than one generation, and includes servants also. In the N.T. when households are baptised (Acts 16:31–34) it means precisely this. Likewise the house or household can refer to a clan, a tribe, and even a race. Thus we read of ‘the house of Israel’, ‘the house of Judah’, ‘the house of David’, etc.
- (c) *In both O.T. and N.T. It is used to refer to the whole community of God, the people of God.* In this sense the whole community is not necessarily localised.

The question is, ‘Are these three Ideas related?’ The original tabernacle or tent was understood to

be the dwelling place of God, although not in the mere spatial sense (cf. Acts 7:44–50). Yet every tent was understood as a domestic dwelling place. In Ezekiel 37:27–28 God says, ‘My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is in the midst of them’. It seems that the sanctuary symbolises and epitomises God and His community.

In Numbers 12:7 God says of Moses, ‘He is entrusted with all my house’. This must mean, ‘my people, my community’. In this context Moses is the servant of God. Israel then is the household of God, His community, ie. ‘my people which are called by my name’ (II Chron. 7:14). Within this community are the family households, and the tribal households, and the dynasty households.

In the N.T. the household of God is the Christian community. Paul says clearly, ‘the household of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth’ (I Tim. 3:15). In Ephesians 2:11–22 Paul says the Gentiles are alienated from the community of Israel, but because of the Cross Jew and Gentile together have access by Christ and the Spirit to the Father. Hence both are members of the household (*oikos*) of God. He then identifies this family with the sanctuary (*naos*), ie. the temple of God, and this sanctuary is living, ie. it is composed of the members as stones. This becomes *the dwelling place* of God. This is very close to Ezekiel 37:27–28 and so to Revelation 21:1–4 where the people of God (the city of God) is the dwelling place of God with His people.

Peter carries on this concept. In I Peter 2:4–10 he posits that the people of God are living stones in the temple built into ‘a spiritual house’ (*oikos*). He goes on to tell them, ‘You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s *own people*..’ Later in the epistle (4:17) he says, ‘For the time



has come for judgement to begin with the household of God . . .’

The writer of Hebrews (3:1–6) refers to Numbers 12:7 where Moses is servant of the house, the people of God, Israel. The writer now refers to it on a wider basis. He says of the Christian community, ‘We are his house’ (oikos) He obviously means that the *house of God has continuity from Israel to the Christian church*. Also he refers to Christ being faithful in the household *as a Son*, Moses being only a servant. In John 8:34–35 Jesus speaks of the Son abiding in the house forever, and the slave not dwelling there forever. He says, ‘If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed’, obviously meaning that those liberated by the Son will not be slaves, and so may abide in the house (*oikia*). In John 14:2 Jesus said he was going to his Father’s house to prepare *dwelling places* for them, i.e. places within the community of God *under the Father*.

In Revelation 3:12 Jesus says he will make the overcomers *pillars* in the temple of God, that is they will be stalwarts in the whole household. In I Cor. 3:10–12, Ephes. 2:20, and II Tim. 2:19 the *foundation* of the house is mentioned, Christ being the cornerstone (Acts 4:11, Ephes. 2:20, I Peter 2:4). Pillars are again mentioned in I Tim. 3:15, and the whole idea of building is brought forward in I Cor. 3 and in Ephes. 4:11–16.

What of course is so wonderful is the fact that this household is of Jews and Gentiles. The argument James uses at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) is precisely on the matter of building (or rebuilding), and it is ‘the dwelling of David’, i.e. the renewed Messianic community. The quotation from Amos 9:11–12 is the closest thing to an O.T. prophecy which includes the Gentiles in the rebuilding of God’s people. Bruce in the *International Commentary (ad.loc)* says, ‘James meant that God had clearly shown His pleasure that the new

community which was to display His glory in the world should be drawn from Gentiles as well as Jews’.

We conclude then that the household of God is God’s people stretching from the beginning of time through to eternity. It is an awesome thing in that God is head of the household, and were it not for the revelation of Him as Father all in the household would be slaves rather than children, servants rather than brethren. The Son is over the household, for his Father. The church in the N.T. has discontinuity with the Hebrew *qahal* in that that was under law, and the new people is under grace. It has continuity in that it is the new true Israel of God. This does not exclude ‘Israel after the flesh’ for ‘all Israel shall be saved’, but even so that salvation must be by faith in Christ.

When it comes to the purpose and usefulness of the household, we see more of these elements under the homely figure or homology of the family. We must emphasise however that community as a thing in itself, or a methodology for living are ideas totally foreign to the people of God. Community was the proper form, and the natural expression of the household of God under the Son and the Father.

### **Conclusion: Creation Redemption, and The Household**

We can only conclude that what God was about in planning creation, and effecting it, as also redeeming and renewing it, and ultimately glorifying it, was to effect His Household, and so show His glory, especially His Fatherhood. This of course includes the Sonship since the Son ‘is not ashamed to call them brethren’ and ‘they shall be like him’ (Hebrews 2:11f, Romans 8:30, 1 John 1:1–3).

We need, then, to see the work of the Father which effected all this.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### THE FAMILY OF THE FATHER

#### Introduction: Family And Household

Much of the nature of the Father is reflected in His household or, family. We have seen that the term 'household covers the whole of the people of God from the beginning of time to the end. In this sense it is the continuing Community of God, the true people of God. It shows His Fatherhood Quantitatively. It shows us that the nuclear family is not the model, so to speak, *of* the true family. Nuclear families there are, but in the Jewish (and later, Christian) economy they found their strength in the total community, the full household, and so were supportive of that which supported them.

Nevertheless 'family' as we know it, both in the nuclear and collective sense is what the heart desires. We need— the domestic elements, we need access to the parents in our human situation. The concept of household is high—, though not too high. Yet at the same time we want not only the Father 'above all things' but also 'in and *through* all things'. We need the personal warmth of the Father and His love.

#### The Father and 'Access'

We have seen that to some degree the temple and household correspond. In the temple God is separated from His people, and is mediated by His priest. There is the altar for forgiveness and cleansing. The 'holy place' contains the symbolic furniture. It Is the place of special prayer. The 'holy of

holies' is sacrosanct. Only once a year may it be entered, and then only by the high—priest, and he only with the blood of the atonement. Representative for the people he has access into the holy Presence. In Christ this access has been given to all who come to God by the true High—Priest, viz. Jesus Christ. He has Opened a new and living way. Hence Romans 5:2, Ephes. 2:18 and 3:11 speak of access, by Christ, *to* the Father. Christ prays regarding this intimacy in John 17:20ff. In John 14:23 he speaks of the Father and the Son taking up their dwelling within man. Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 21 (amongst other passages) speak of the people of God forming the dwelling place or sanctuary of God. God dwells with His people. In His presence as He dwells as Father Is the potential for family love and domesticity. To have access to the Father Is to have access to one another as brethren.

#### The Nature of The Family

##### (i) Father and brethren Constitute the Family

We repeat that to use the modern term 'family' is not to oppose the Biblical term 'household?' but rather to emphasise its domestic elements. We will see shortly that God as Father Is King, yet to emphasise His lofty nature and to make Him remote in His holiness Is to deprive the family of its love and nearness.

We have seen that the term 'disciple' was primarily used for those who followed Christ, and a term he used, giving himself out as their master and demanding total allegiance. However, towards the last he uses the term 'friends' of them, and then, following his resurrection the term 'brethren'. The term 'brethren?' Is one used on the inside, whilst 'disciple' is a term mostly used by those outside. The emphasis on being brethren in the Acts

and the Epistles shows how significant a term it is Peter says in effect (I Peter 1:22) that the purpose of regeneration is 'love of the brethren'. In I Thess. 4:9 Paul says that there is no need to teach brotherly love since God Himself teaches this. This is logical. His Fatherhood implies and demands our brotherhood. In fact in I John 3:10–13 we are either children of God and love the brethren or we are children of Satan and do not. I John 3:14 says that love of the brethren is the sign of having passed into life, from death. In I John 4:7 – 5:3 the test of knowing God is to love the brethren. It is Impossible to know God as love, and not love the brethren.

### **(ii) Love is the Power for, and Manner of, Life**

The terms 'love' and 'brethren' correlate. In Matt. 23:1–10 Jesus speaks of calling no man Father, Teacher or Master. He says, 'You have one Teacher, and you are all brethren'. He makes brethren correlate with Teacher. In this sense as sons of the "Father they are brethren under the Teacher. In the family, love is the means by which relationships are full and harmonious, and by which the will of the Father is done. In fact love, far from being merely emotional is the expression of the true nature of God and so of Father and family. God Is love, and when the brethren, love one another God 'dwells in them and the goal of His love is brought to its goal in them, and others see God. Just as the Son loved the Father and so did His will, so the brethren love both the Son and the Father and do their will. Part of that will is care and concern for the family of man and the household of God (cf. Gal. 6:10, 1 John 3:16ff, and Matt. 5:43–48).

Not to love is really to hate, no neutral position being known. To walk in light is to walk in

love, and to hate is to walk in darkness and to be in death (I John 1,2,3). It Is I Peter 1:22 and I John 4:19 which again come into prominence in the matter of love. God Himself, as Father, teaches that family love. The goal of being redeemed is to love the brethren. Without this redemption this God of love cannot be known. We love because He first loved us: ie. we love God and our fellow beings, because God first loved us, yet we know that love only through the Cross (see I John 4:19, then 4:9–10). Love may be received simply (Rom. 5:5) but not without a revelation of the Cross. It may not be exercised except it flow from the Source, God Himself, to the family.

### **(iii) The Family is Holy**

As we have seen in Exodus 19:5 (cf. Lev. 11:44) the people of God are holy because God is holy. When, in the N . T. He becomes known by His true name 'Father', then it is the Father who is holy. This is the thrust behind the first words of the Lord's prayer. It is the thrust of the beatitudes. Only the pure in heart see God. Hence in 11 *Cor.* 6:14 – 7:1 the Father is Father to those who separate themselves from darkness and uncleanness. Only *to* such can Hosea 1:10 be applied, ie. 'Sons (and daughters) of the living God.'

Likewise in I Peter 1:14–17 Peter quotes the O.T. command of Lev 11:44. The children must be holy, like the Father. If they invoke the Father their lives must reflect His Fatherhood. In Revelation 14:1ff, the special group of 144,000, have the names of the Father and the Son upon their heads, and they are those who have not defiled themselves. Again, in the last two chapters of the Revelation it is seen that in the ultimate city of God there is nothing that is impure. Those who are there have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and if God will dwell amongst them then they must

be a holy sanctuary, nothing else will suffice.

#### (iv) The Family is Active

We have seen that the (unique) Son delights to do the will of the Father. Likewise the children say, 'Our Father ... thy will be done'. Hence as the Son did the will *of the Father so do* the sons. They are, anyway, incorporated in the Son (Gal. 3:26–29) for they are 'in Christ'. They have been baptised into him and have been baptised in the Spirit (as was he) to carry out the will of the Father (Acts 1:8, cf. Matt. 7:21–22).

In the Book of the Revelation, especially in chapters 2 and 3, the children of God are over-comers, i.e. conquerors. Seven times promises are given to those who overcome. These are the sons *par excellence*. If all are not thus then they ought to be. To these promises another is added in Rev. 21:7, namely that the conqueror will inherit all things, and God will be his God, and he shall be the son of the Father.

In the N.T. it is shown that the family is equipped for action. The gifts of the Spirit strengthen the church, and keep it healthy within. Likewise they aid the members in proclaiming the Gospel, teaching converts, making disciples, establishing brethren' In love. With these gifts are also spiritual weapons whereby the family can fight the evil that opposes it and the will of God. These weapons are most powerful to the point that they can defeat any form of evil.

### Conclusion; The – Family Reflects The Father

If the sons reflect the Son, in their love, their holiness, their capacity for brotherly love, their whole love, then they reflect the Father. If they carry out the will of Messiah who is carrying out

the will of the Father, then they reflect the Father.

Family does not exist for its own sake. Since the Father and His Son have been busy Since creation in serving the creation providentially and redemptively, then the family also exists to serve the creation. Because it is incorporated in the will of the Father, therefore the children are those who experience love, peace and joy.

The value of this knowledge for human families is clear. We can draw the following conclusions, and draw them only because of the revelation, by the Son, Of the true Father, and hence of true familyhood. We can understand how fatherhood, brotherhood, and familyhood should be in the human scene. We not only imitate What We see but we draw from the true source of all love, familyhood, and soon (Ephes. 3:14–15, 4:6, etc.).

When then we come to the high concept of the household of God we can see the futility of a nuclear family existing as an entity In itself. It must relate to the whole family, and be encouraged by the family history. In the earthly realm the whole household looks back to Father Abraham when it wishes to understand human fatherhood. When It wishes to function properly as a family It looks to the true Father, and is glad of the direction of the Lord, the Son, the Messiah. One day, in eternity, it will operate perfectly as the household of God, the Family of the Father.

What concerns us, however, is that God: whilst being Father, is not only Father. Whilst His many attributes and Powers may relate to His Fatherhood, yet His total work cannot be encapsulated only in the term of Father. We need then to see the work of the Father to better understand His Person.

## CHAPTER NINE

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### INTRODUCTION: THE WORK OF THE FATHER

#### Introduction: The Triune God

In seeking to understand the Trinity we often use analogy, and this, for understanding must be inconclusive. Also we work from what we know humanly of ‘persons’ in order to understand the ‘Persons’ of the Trinity. This too must be deficient. As for a triune relationship, and the God– head being an entity, we find such things difficult to understand. We need a basis for comparison, or we require reference to something of a Precedent, and of course have neither. What we must understand is that each Person of the Trinity (to use a term) is discrete, ie. has his own being within himself, yet Is not of himself a God, otherwise we are landed into tri–theism. If we say that each Person is but a *mode of the Godhead then we* may finish with one Person (God) and three modes – Father, Son and Spirit – and so be in the heresy of modalism. Semantics are most important, and in this case extremely difficult.

We have Pointed out that currently two disciplines exist in theology – Christology and Pneumatology, and a third – Pateriology, as such, – does not exist. Hence we talk about ‘God’ and about His Son, and about His Holy Spirit, and in one sense this Is right. We wish to show Him as distinct from the Son and the Spirit. When we call Him ‘Father’ then we do so to distinguish Him from His Son and His Spirit. Yet we look at His work as being that not only of ‘Father’ but of King, Judge, Redeemer, and so on. We do not see this

as incorporated into or integrally a part of His Fatherhood.

When, then, we say ‘The work of the Father’ do we simply mean His Fatherhood of the Son, and His bringing us into His family or household, or do we include creation, redemption and glorification as part of that work? The answer certainly is not simple

#### The Distinctive Work of The Father

It is clear that although Jesus said, ‘I and the Father are one’, he did not mean ‘We are coterminal. We are not two persons.’ He meant ‘We are at one in all we do.’ He could even say, ‘I in thee, and thou in me,’ but this did not mean coalescence, one being.

That there is a distinction is very clear. God is Creator, in the Sense that He initiates creation. Whilst Col. 1:16 says ‘all things were created through him (the Son) and for him’, yet I Cor. 8:6 says, ‘... for us there is one God, the Father, *from* whom are all things and *for whom* we exist’. Whilst things may be *for the* Son (Col. 1:16) yet *they are through* him and not *from* him. Hebrews 2:10 repeats of the Father, ‘for whom and by whom all things exist’, and Romans 11:36 says, ‘For *from* him and *through* him and *for* him all things exist’. It is significant that Paul says, ‘For us there is one God, *the Father*’, etc. This, note, *is in the context of creation*.

In John 17 Jesus makes it clear that as the Son he was given glory prior to creation, and this glory was given by the Father. In that sense, as is the case with all sonship, his Sonship in its fullness is dependent upon the Father. He does not take the initiative in becoming incarnate, or in going to the Cross. In John 10:17–18 he says the Father loves him because he lays down his life for the sheep. He adds,

‘This charge I have

received of my Father'. He repeats the thought in John 14:31. In any case Jesus continually speaks (over 40 times in John's Gospel) of having been sent by the Father.

The term 'subordination' is looked upon with distaste by man, for it is assumed (even though it is argued otherwise) that subordination implies inferiority. Time and again Jesus said that to be least was to be greatest, to be greatest was to be servant of all. There are many human psychological reasons for rejecting subordination but it is doubtful whether the Biblical view of subordination means inferiority. In Jesus' case he accepts the fact that everything he has is given to him of his Father. This being so does not mean he is inferior, for dependence does not imply inferiority. The old Creeds spoke of him being 'of one substance with the Father', thus as to substance (Gk. *homoousios*) they are one, but as to *office* and operations they differ. The Father always takes the initiative, yet because the will of the Son accords, voluntarily, with that of the Father, the Son too works according to His will.

To go back to I Cor. 8:6 where Paul speaks to us as though of a functional principle – he says, 'For us there is one God, the Father'. We have noticed that in the O. T. there is one name for God, 'I AM' or YAHWEH, however It may be interpreted. In the N. T. there is one name for God – the Father. This is the name Jesus declared to his disciples. This is what he came to declare. He emphasises that he is not the Father. John says he was the Word. He says, 'The Word was face-to-face with God, and the Word was God'. However, God was not the Word or the passage would make nonsense. The Word communicates God, and therefore cannot do this properly unless he is of the same order. Whatever the Word-not-become-flesh spoke, It was in significant measure different from what the Word-become-flesh spoke.

In every way we may conclude that the work which the Son has come to do, that is to reveal the Father, and to be the mediator of redemption, is not in fact the work of the Father. His work is to initiate creation and redemption. In Some senses this is because it is He and not the Son who demands what the Cross supplies. He sets forth the Son as the propitiation for sins. He bruises him. He lays upon him the iniquity of us all. He demands satisfaction of His law. The work of the Son is to bear, to receive, to carry, to be made sin. It is the work of the Father to initiate and require the suffering. It is the Son's to obey, even to the death of the Cross, and to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows.

### **The Deep Differences Between Father And Son**

It has often been noted that there is a difference between the God of the O. T. and the God of the N. T. There cannot be differences within God. In the O.T. He is wrathful, and also in the N.T. In the O.T. He has *chesed* – loving kindness and grace. In the N.T. He is 'the God of all grace' In the O.T He is loved (Psalm 116:1) and also in the N. T. What then is the difference? There is no difference in God but doubtless there is a deeper revelation of His Person and work. The Son has come to reveal the Father. He has come to reconcile men by the blood of His Cross. Light, salvation and love are now apparent. Nevertheless God is the same. It is just that Christ is His revelator. It is just that the plan has unfolded more. It is just that redemption has been accomplished objectively.

Nothing that we have seen in the O.T. has changed. He is still the Holy One. His holiness begets wrath when men and demons seek to violate

that holiness. While a man live he is still under the law, as much in the N.T. as in the O.T. Yet one has come to fulfil that law – Christ. The work of Christ differs from the wrath, law demands, and justice of the holy God. Yet his Work is vitally connected with the same wrath, law–demands, justice and holiness.

### **Conclusion: Everything May Not Appear To Be Of The Father, But It Is**

By this we mean that the God of holiness in the O.T. who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and who cannot look upon sin, the God Who shows Himself in so many ways which seem foreign to the N.T., such as the destruction of nations, is the God whom we do not see as Father. We can understand something of His Kingship of His people, but even their mentions of Him as Father seem rather of despair than of comfort. Certainly the intimacy that the child of God has as a result of Christ's work and the coming of the Spirit seems little evident in the O.T. Is God then, as we have said, different?

The answer is, 'No!' In the N.T. there is much of wrath. Stronger Passages than II Thess. 1:6–9 and many of the Revelation sections cannot be found in the O.T. Even in the Pronouncement of salvation, as in John 3:36 we read that those who believe (in Christ) shall have eternal life, but those who refuse the Son have the wrath of God abiding on them. Likewise the Gospels, Acts and Epistles emphasise the judgement to come. Whilst the Son is appointed Judge (John 5:22, Acts 10:42, 17:30, etc.) yet it is the Father who gives His Position and work of judgement to the Son.

Our Problem in linking the elements of the Father other than those of light, love, salvation, and immediate Fatherhood is that such elements do not

appear to be those of the Father. They belong to the 'I AM', but not to 'the Father'. Yet if Christ is declaring the true Name of God to the people, then all the elements must be subsumed under Fatherhood. It is when we see Him as King, and then see the N.T. teaching that the King is Father (the Father is the King) that theocratic becomes patrocratic. A harder, stronger view of Fatherhood emerges. This becomes clear when we see God's relation to His elect people.

This view is Strengthened by the knowledge that the loving Son, seeking the salvation of his brethren, and laying down his life for them, also reflects elements of God which we do not immediately associate with the Fatherhood. The Son becomes judge. He also becomes wrathful, so much so that Scripture can talk of the terrible wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 8:12–17). The Revelation itself shows the Lamb as pouring out the vials of wrath, and authorising the terrible judgement of Rev. 14:14–20. Indeed in 19:11–21 he undertakes a great carnage of the evil forces. As to his holiness, the first chapter of the Revelation portrays its intensity. It is no less than in Isaiah 6, a passage which John, Incidentally, ascribes to Jesus (John 12:41).

Our task, then, is to see what work the Father *does which Precedes* the revelation of the N.T. and to note its necessity and nature. Is it all to be ascribed to His Fatherhood?

## CHAPTER TEN

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### THE GOD WHO IS KING OVER ALL

#### Introduction: King By Creation

It is self-evident that the God who creates the universe is its supreme Commander. He owns it. Everything in it is His, and because He has authored it He has true authority. It is so self-evident as to need no proof. This is the theme of the song of the elders, 'Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour, and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created'.

Throughout Scripture we have statements of His Kingship and His Kingdom. Psalm 47:7 says, 'For God is king over all the earth'. Psalm 24:8, *IO* asks, 'Who is the King of glory?' and answers, 'Thou art the King of glory ... O Lord of hosts!' Psalm 22:28 says, 'For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations'. Psalm 10:16 says, 'The Lord is King for ever and ever'. Psalm 11:4 says, 'The Lord Is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven'. He, then, is truly King.

The term 'kingdom of God' is not as such found in the O. T., but the idea is very strongly present. Psalm 145:11-13 states, 'They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and tell of thy power, to make known to the sons of men thy mighty deeds, and the glorious splendour of thy kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations'. Psalm 103:19 has it, 'The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all'.

In Daniel this Kingdom is referred to by Nebuchadnezzar and others as a universal and timeless Kingdom (4:37, 7:14ff, cf. Psalms 93:1, 96:10, 97:1).

#### Israel, God, And The Kingdom

Israel was a kingdom without doubt. However it was made a Kingdom by God, and His Kingdom in Particular (Exodus 19:5). Whilst the Kingdom of God was not limited to Israel it was powerfully present and expressed in Israel which was a theocracy. This fact is not invalidated by the disloyalty of the people, from time to time. Yet the Kingdom was not static. It was to be the Priest-Nation among the nations (Exodus 19:5), and Isaiah 43:6-7 declares 'Its people were to glorify God. Two elements need to be noted: -

##### (i) God is Father to Israel

Israel was regarded as God's son (Exod.4:22, Hosea 11:1). Also those of Israel were sons or children of God (eg. Deut. 14:1, cf. 32:6). Israel seemed slow to call God Father, but He chose to call Israel His son, and the people His children.

Such passages as Isaiah 63:16, 64:8-9 and Mal. 2:10 show that in desperate straits the true ones of Israel clung to this fact. What should be understood is that for nations the King was looked to, to be the father of his people. Father and King were almost synonymous. The current idea of a father is not strong and authoritative, nor does the family expect much royalty from its male parent.

##### (ii) The Father-King and the Son-King

We have seen from Psalms 2 and 89 (cf. II Sam. 7:14) that God, as King, appoints and anoints the Son-King. This must be the case in Dan. 7:14ff (Isaiah 9:6-7) for the Kingdom is given to the Son,



and under him are the holy ones, ie. the saints. In Zech. 9:9 the King comes to Israel and is humble: he must be the King to whom Nathaniel refers (John 1:49), and to whom the multitude referred at Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

The figure of this King is undoubtedly there in the O.T., and Israel looks forward to a time when this Messiah–King shall rule, not only over Israel, but over all the nations, and the true Kingdom shall come into being, upon earth. It was to such a King and to such a Kingdom that the people of Jesus' day were looking. Hence John the Baptist found a people who were waiting for the appearance of the King, and they listened to his message on the Kingdom of God. They repented and were baptised as a form of preparation for the Kingdom.

## **The Son and The Kingdom**

### **(i) The Father is King: The King is Father**

In the Book of the Revelation Jesus is clearly stated to be King. See Rev. 1:5, 17:14, 19:16 and compare with I Timothy 6:15 where the reference is to God. What comes to us is that as the Father is King, so also is the Son King. In this sense he reveals the Father as King, but then it is the King who is Father! So much for his unique relationship as Father, but he also reveals the King as Father of His people, the community of the Kingdom

His message is similar to that of John. Repentance because the Kingdom is coming, in fact, in a sense, has come. Where he is the Kingdom is; what he does is the rule of that Kingdom coming upon men and women. However, whilst he gives parabolic teaching of the Kingdom he does not spell out the Kingdom as such, for as he explains to Pilate, 'My Kingdom is not of this world'. It is in the Sermon on the Mount and similar passages

that he shows very warmly and intimately that God is Father, God is King, the King is Father, the Father is King. The Lord's Prayer shows this: 'Our Father ... thy Kingdom come ...' Gentiles seek after an earthly kingdom, but the true children seek the Kingdom of heaven first and the things that are needed are added to them. At the same time the children fear and reverence the Father. They obey Him as King. They count it a thing of high esteem to enter the Kingdom. They fear not to enter it. The Son warns them that mere blood descent from Abraham is not enough. He echoes John in this. He says the Gentiles will come and sit down in the Kingdom but the (blood) children of the Kingdom will be cast out.

### **(ii) The Kingdom must be Sealed**

The making The Son to be King and the children to inherit the Kingdom is not mere Partiality on God's part. His Kingdom as created has constantly been Opposed by evil Powers who attempt to subvert it. These powers must be destroyed and defeated. The Father is out to liberate His children (John 8:31–36), and He does it by the Son (I John 3:8, Romans 14:9, Hebrews 2:14–15, etc.) *It is at* this Point that we see the aim f God as Father. As we have said, the Son's work is to obey the Father. However it is always the Father who takes the initiative. It is the King–Creator who decides what must be done In His universe. The Son can carry out such charges as are given to him. It is the special work of the Father–King to redeem and restore His creation.

### **(iii) The Kingdom must come upon all Creation**

Ultimately it is the plan of the Father to give the Kingdom to His children as their inheritance. With much tribulation they will enter it, and meanwhile they suffer for it (Acts 14:22, cf. II Thess. 1:5). The children must value it highly (Gal. 5:21,

Ephes. 5:6, 1 Cor. 6:9) for it is a precious inheritance since ‘The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.

On the other hand, the powers of darkness will fear the Kingdom. Their prey are ‘transferred from the power of darkness to the Kingdom of the Son of His love’ (Col. 1:13). However it is more than that. The Kingdom is sealed at the Cross in the defeat of all the enemies of God and His people. Satan, his princely and demonic Spirits, and the evil part of mankind in cohorts with Satan must all be defeated at the Cross, and ultimately destroyed. In one sense this begins in the garden with God’s prophecy to the serpent, and continues until the end when the ‘King of kings and Lord of lords’ makes a final defeat of the powers of evil (cf. Rev. 19:11–21, Ch. 20). Creation at this point is released from any hold of evil, and is restored, not only to its pristine Purity but is fully glorified also.

### **The Father and The Consummated Kingdom**

In I Cor. 15:24–28 it is evident that the final triumph of the Kingdom (cf. Heb. 1:2–3, 10:12–13) *is* that it may, in the ultimate, be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all. Likewise in Phil. 2:9–11 every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to *the glory of the Father*. This is why the Son comes ‘in the glory of the Father’. This is why in Revelation 21 God dwells with His people, and they are His sanctuary, His dwelling place.

The whole point is that God has ever been the Father–King, but the Kingliness comes to the fore in the O. T., and whilst it does not recede in the N. T. the Father element becomes revealed in greater measure, and in wonderful fullness. At no point does His Fatherhood descend to the trivial or the

banal, and certainly never to the sentimental. The fact that He is King preserves it from that. His Son Jesus is Lord which is, virtually, King. He too upholds the grandeur and the glory and the holiness of the Father, although in one sense that is unique to the Father.

All things, then, show that the Creator–King Is the Father–King, is the Creator–Father, and that He will bring His creation to its ripeness and fullness, without Pollution and without the triumph of evil. In all this the Father and the Son work together, and so show their love for their creation.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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### THE HOLY FATHER: THE FATHER OF HOLINESS

#### Introduction: The Goal Of Holiness For Creation

Doubtless God's goal for His creation is not outlined in the creation account. It is simply stated that creation, when completed, was 'very good' which ensures it had no imperfection but was fully functional. It is when we examine the plan of God that we see the goal of holiness. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul says, '... he chose us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.' It would be inconceivable of course that His people should be Impure. Since they are to be to the 'praise of His glory' they must evidence purity also (cf. Ephes. 1:11–14, Isaiah 43:6–7). I John 3:1–3 makes it clear that the sons will be like the Son, and it implies they will be pure. In II Cor. 6:14 – 7:1 they are only 'sons and daughters of the living God' who have set aside impurity, and who have cleansed themselves. This accords with Gal. 5:19–21, Ephes, 5:6, and I Cor. 6:9 that the impure shall not enter the (final) Kingdom of heaven. Revelation 21:27, speaking of the City of God, says, 'But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood...' In fact in 21:8 the evil, the polluted and so on are cast into the lake of fire. In II Peter 3 the writer speaks of the great conflagration which will purify the heavens and the earth so that there will be 'new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells only righteousness'. This accords with the 'new heavens and the new earth' of Revelation 21:1–5, and Isaiah 65:17f, and

66:22f. Hebrews 12:14 exhorts to both reconciliation and holiness 'without which no man shall see the Lord'.

If then the end, or the consummation is to be in holiness. then all God's purposes for creation must include that holiness.

#### The Holy Creator and King

In the O. T. the holiness of God is Presupposed and emphasised. The vision of Isaiah in the temple, and the message of the seraphim, 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is the fullness of His glory' indicates that He is holiness itself. This holiness is declared by the prophets, time and again (cf. Ezekiel 28:25, 36:22, 38:23, Hosea 11:9). In Isaiah 57:15 we read, 'For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, *whose name is Holy*, 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit ...'

In some places, as that of Isaiah in the temple, or Jacob at Bethel, the holiness of God is known in the awe of His presence. Yet the basis of holiness is that God is other than man, and above him. In Ephesians 4:6 the Father is 'above all', and this transcendence is emphasised throughout Scripture. Hence in I Tim. 6:15 Paul speaks of the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see'. Isaiah is terrified that he has seen God. Moses wishes to see God but is told that no man can see God and live. Man has a graduated sight of God, through theophanies. The 'naked beam of light' must not fall on man or he will perish.

However. this separateness of God from man is man's hope. God's holiness is dynamic in that God seeks to purge and purify man. especially man who

is elect. God's judgement of the flood springs not only from His justice and judgement, but He seeks to judge in order to purify. If He leaves man in his pollution there is no hope for him. Judgement is always merciful. Those of a humble and contrite heart (Isa. 57:15) are revived by the holiness of God. When the repentant are judged they are brought into new life. From beginning to end God IS concerned not simply to exercise an executive Lordship over His creation but to purify it, and the ultimate, as we have seen, will be a purified creation.

### **(i) Holiness, Wrath and Judgement**

God always has His own people. We have seen that Abel was of God, and Cain 'was of that evil one'. Seth substitutes for the murdered Abel. Then commences the line of 'the sons of God' in contrast to 'the daughters of men'. God judges at the Flood, not merely to cleanse by water, but to show His wrath on evil. His covenant with Noah is not to say that He will not judge, but that He will not disturb the course of creation in order to do this. Judgements such as at Sodom and Gomorrah and His ways of Punishing nations ('the iniquity of the Amorites Is not yet fulfilled') are seen both in the O. T. and the Prophecies concerning the end-time, especially those of the Revelation.

A key verse to understanding holiness is Habakkuk 1:13, 'You are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and you cannot look upon evil'. This must mean that God cannot stand by and watch evil triumph. He must not only refuse to countenance such, but He must actively go out to vent His wrath on it. In this case Israel receives the wrath and not the Chaldeans, for God visits Israel, His holy people with judgement. Numerous passages of the prophets speak of God sanctifying His name by judgement of His people, and by His restoration of them (eg. Ezekiel 36:16–32). Passages such as

Ezekiel 7:5–13 ('Now I will soon pour out my wrath upon you, and spend my anger against you, and judge you according to your ways; and I will punish you for all your abominations. And my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; I will punish you according to your ways, while your abominations are in your midst'), and Nahum 1:3 (Cf. Exodus 34:6–7), ('I will by no means acquit the guilty'), show that God as the 'Holy One of Israel' will judge His people in wrath. Whilst this wrath Is not analogous to man's wrath, yet it is a true and fearful thing. Romans 2:4–5 shows that it is a righteous wrath, not arbitrary or cruel. God is Holy, and so He must judge. He may not subvert or by-pass His own law. His holiness must issue in judgement.

'Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Is related to the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is related to God's holiness. Direct confrontation by the purity of God sends Isaiah into terror. If God Is the Holy King and the Holy Creator, how then can sinful man stand before Him?

### **(ii) Israel and the Holiness of God**

We have already seen that Israel is the holy people of God. They are not Intrinsically holy, but are holy in that they have been set apart by God for Himself and His purpose. They are the chosen, but not the favourite people of God. Passages such as Exodus 19:5, Deut. 7:6, and Leviticus 11:44 (amongst many others) show that Israel is a holy nation because she is chosen by God to be His people. Israel must be like God, holy.

For this reason everything in Israel is holy. The people, the tabernacle, its furniture and its rituals. Sacrifices for sins keep them at the correct level of moral holiness. The very tabernacle has its processes of cleansing, sacrifice, and approach to God the Holy One. There is the Holy Place, and finally the Holy of Holies. There the

blood of the Atonement alone may suffice. Once a year the high priest may enter and place the blood upon the mercy seat under the wings of the cherubim. Man has made his way into the presence of God, albeit by the awesome mediation of the appointed high priest.

Israel as we have seen comes under terrible judgements. Hence the Exile. Hence the teachings of the prophets as to God's holiness. 'They vexed the Holy One of Israel: they vexed His Holy Spirit' (cf. Isaiah 63:10) Is the constant message. Thus when we come to the time of the N.T. we see a people purged of its idols through judgements, but sadly enough not purged of its inner idolatry (cf. Luke 11:24–26, Acts 7:39:53). Hence John speaks of the wrath that is to come with the coming of the Kingdom and its Messiah: 'His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but *the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.*'

### The Holy Father And The Son

He who is Creator and King and Covenant–Father to Israel persists in building a people for Himself. The Gospels make it clear that Jesus comes to the tribes of the house of Israel. Yet Jesus more than hints that Gentiles will be accepted where Jews will be cast out. Finally he sends his disciples not only to 'Jerusalem and all Judea', but also to 'Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth', ie. the Gentiles.

How then does this Holy Creator and King tolerate the evil amongst rebellious humanity? How is His wrath averted from them? How can He purge such a people, much less make them His own people? The answer of course lies in His Son. God sends His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of mankind (cf. I John 4:9–10, Romans 3:24f).

We have seen that Jesus teaches the holiness of God. 'When you pray say, "Our Father ... hallowed be Thy Name..."' In the Sermon on the Mount he said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' All the sermon was concerned with God as Father, God as King, the Father as King. The Father, the King, and the Kingdom. Its entire teaching was of holy living, though not merely in a pietistic manner.

When Jesus' birth was announced to Mary, the angel said, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will Overshadow you: therefore the child to be born *will be called holy*, the Son of God.' The demons and spirits cried out, 'We know who you are, the Holy One of God.' Without doubt he lived a holy life, though not after the manner of the pietists or the ascetics. His enjoyment of life Scandalised the Pharisees. He was called a wine–bibber and a glutton, yet none could convict him of actual sin. He saw through, and disclosed, the hypocritical ritual clean sings of the Pharisees and their ilk. He taught that nothing that went into a man defiled him, but that which Proceeded from his heart.

On the night of his betrayal he addressed God as 'Holy Father!' and 'Righteous Father!' It was not that he had not communicated this generally all the time of his ministry, but in the prayer he articulates the fact. Holy Father; holy Son. Yet it is the Work of the Cross that is the work of purification.

Long before, the prophets had told of a time of purification to come. This is seen in Isaiah 4:2–4, Ezekiel 36:24–28, Daniel 9:24, Zechariah 13:1 and other kindred passages. If we remember that the wrath of God is poured out upon sin and those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18) then we see that the penalty upon sin is itself the action of God's wrath upon it. If we see that His holiness is the basis of His wrath upon sin and its

impurity, then we can see – especially from the event of Isaiah in the temple – that the outworking of the penalty of sin, is in fact at one with purification from it.

### The Propitiation of the Father

Only that which satisfies God the Holy may calm the conscience of man the unholy (but) now redeemed. If it is asked how man can be holy and pure at the end time, then the answer must be the cleansing of the Cross. Hebrews 1:3 and 9:14 stress this cleansing. Passages such as Matt. 26:28, Acts 3:19, 22:16 show that through the Cross there is complete release from sins. Romans 6:7, 3:24ff, Gal. 2:16–21 and other passages show that the penalty was completely worked out on the Cross. Hence through the Cross man is freed from both penalty and pollution of sin. Indeed he is also freed from its power (John 8:34–36, Romans 6:10–17). Only such people – those who have been justified – can be called saints. They have also been sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18, 15:8–9, cf. I Peter 1:1–2, II Thess. 2:13, etc.).

God set forth His Son to be a propitiation. He sent him to be the propitiation for our sins. Thus the propitiation averts wrath from sinful man by pouring it out upon the Son (cf. Zech. 13:7, Matt. 26:28–30). The Son becomes the propitiation, and satisfies the law–demands (Romans 3:24ff, 6:7, Gal. 2:19–20). The Kingdom of the King which is given to ‘the saints of the most high’ (Daniel ch. 7) means that those of the Kingdom (Col. 1:13) are now saints. They are ‘called to be saints’. Together they constitute application of Exodus 19:5 to the new true people of God as is seen in I Peter 2:9–10. Now they are the holy people of God.

### Conclusion: The Father and His Holy People

What was said to Israel (Lev. 11:44) is now said

to the people of God, the church. ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’ (I Peter 1:13ff). In this context it is said, ‘And if you *invoke as Father* him who judges each one impartially, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile’. Such are now ‘a chosen race, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people’. The New Testament is filled with exhortations to holy living, with assurances that they are the people of God and as such must separate themselves from impurity and darkness, and walk in light (e. g. I Thess. 4:1–5, II Cor. 6:14 – 7:1, Ephes. 5:1–14, I John 1:3–10, I Peter 1:22, etc.).

The holy people are in the Son, and so constitute the true sonship of God. They hallow the name of their Father, they are pure in heart and see Him. They ascend unto the hill of the Lord to receive the blessing of the Lord – with clean hands and a Pure heart (Psalm 24) because they have been purified and the blood of the Cross goes on cleansing from all sin’. More, they have a disposition to holiness, and a hatred of that which is evil.

This being so, then the loftiness of the Holy God is not beyond them. He as Father is truly *above all*, but then He is *through all*, and *in all* His holiness, and His determination to do His own Special work and pursue sin to its last lair, purging it, is the expression of that holiness. However, in the ultimate, His holiness works itself out in Fatherhood, as Fatherhood in holiness. The purpose of creation is the purified family. By this God is seen as the Father of glory, and the glory of the family is the glory of the Father.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE GOD OF ALL GRACE AND REDEMPTION

#### Introduction: Creation Attacked

God's credibility as Creator lies in the fact of whether or not He is 'a faithful Creator' (I Peter 4:19), ie. whether He can carry His creation through to completion, maturation, glorification, and it not fail finally. Without doubt the prophecies foretell this very clearly, but then are they reliable, and what Biblical evidence is there that God is succeeding?

The first thing we need to see is that the creation is attacked by evil. Without going into any philosophy of evil we need to see a number of things: Satan, created originally as an angel of glory and with high authority, becomes infatuated with himself. proud, and seeks to oppose God. He seeks to take over what authority he can, If not all. In Revelation 12, Ezekiel 28, Isaiah 14 and similar passages where explicit teaching as such in regard to Satan is not given, but many implications may be studied, we see the problem. Satan rejects creation as God made it, and seeks to build his own kingdom (cf. Luke 11:18, Col. 1:13, Rev. 16:10).

The story of the fall of man is linked with the deception of the serpent (Genesis 3, Revelation 12:1–10). Romans 1:18–32 shows clearly that man, in rejecting God rejected the essential nature of creation. To reject the Creator is to reject His creation. Romans 1:18 speaks of men 'holding down the truth in unrighteousness', ie. of doing the opposite of the truth, the truth being the active

way of God's creation, ie. 'thing-as-they-really-are', and things as they really (essentially) operate. Man seeks his autonomy over and against God's authority and rule as King, Creator, Father.

Theological ideas about God being able to 'tidy' up His universe, as it were by some supernatural force, are really inadmissible. God must act in accordance with His own person and being. To call Him omnipotent and say He can do anything is to suggest He can work outside the context of love, justice, holiness, truth and righteousness were He to wish so to do, or were He pressed so to do. His integrity as Creator is not shown by His mere destruction of hostile forces and a forceful 'setting to rights' of His creation, but rather by those modes which accord with His true being.

What, however, we see is that His creation is under threat by hostile forces – themselves emerging from the original pure creation – and so His credibility as a faithful Creator is put in question.

#### The Situation of Good and Evil

Evil must not be allowed an ontological origin. Evil in itself is not a viable thing, and in fact constitutes an attack upon true being. Falsity fastens on truth, evil on good, impurity upon purity. The term 'origin' must be disallowed. The fact of evil forces is not in doubt. Satan moves out of his given being as an angelic power and leader. He denies his essential nature. Like – wise his followers, likewise fallen man. Evil is not of the essential-nature of truth and good, but is an attempt to destroy what is essentially good. The question of the exercise of will is raised. Good to be good, must be chosen. God, to be obeyed, must voluntarily be obeyed. Hence the nature of evil is the wrong and perverse use of will.

What concerns us is that creation should naturally, and even voluntarily, follow the order of the Creator. All creatures should function according to the creational and functional principles of the universe. God in His holiness, righteousness and goodness must oppose that which is evil and cause its doom and extinction as an effective power. As we have observed, when He does this it must be consonant with His essential being, His true character. We need then to see something of the composition of the forces of evil, and the intentions of those forces.

### Man is under attack from many enemies

Alone of all the creatures man is made in the image and likeness of God. This accords him unique affinity with God, and the Possibility, by rejection, of the greatest of evil. At the same time not all men who rebel against God are deliberately allied with Satanic powers. The unsuspecting Jews could be called children of the devil and not be at all aware that this was actually so (John 8:44). Nevertheless man is allied with evil through his rebellion. The following elements are made clear from Scripture:–

- (a) *Man is under the power of Satan.* This is seen from Ephes. 2:1–3, Heb. 2:14–15, I John 3:8, 5:19. He is under this power because of sin, and so the fear of death and judgement.
- (b) *Man is under the power of the world–system and the world powers.* Passages such as Gal. 1:4, Col. 1:13, Gal. 4:8–9, cf. Ephes. 6:12, Rom. 8:38, I Cor. 8:5f, etc. It is evident from Col. 2:14–15 that man is under the power of the evil princes because of his sins, his breaking of the law, ie. his guilt.
- (c) *Man is under the power of Sin.* Jesus

stated this clearly (John 8:31–36). Rom. 6:16 states the principle. Man desires to sin and comes under its power. Its power has three elements – sin’s Pollution, its Penalty and its (habitual) power. However, sin is the sting of death, being related to the (guilt of the) law. Man is under the grip of sin because of his (objective) guilt. for wrong acts committed.

- (d) *Man is under the power of Death.* This is seen from I Cor. 15:55–56, Heb. 2:14–15. Man has broken the law, the outcome of which is death. He fears the death which follows judgement, and so fears death (cf. I John 4:17–18). The sting of death is sin but the strength of sin is the law. So man, because of guilt is under the Power of death.
- (e) *Man is under the power of Wrath.* God is love, but can be Provoked to wrath. He is never, however, essentially wrath, only essentially love. Man lives under the wrath of God because he goes contrary to the true order of things (Rom. 1:18). To fear death is to fear judgement, is to fear wrath – the wrath to come (I Thess. 1:10). Man sees sin, death, the law, wrath and judgement in the one bundle. He is fearful because of his guilt.
- (f) *Man is under the power of the Law.* For man who disobeys, the law of God becomes ‘the law of sin and death’. Man comes under the curse of the law he disobeys (Gal. 3:10). Had man no guilt the law would have no hold. Hence sin, the law, death and wrath are the one.
- (g) *Man is under the power of Conscience.* Whilst man’s conscience is polluted with dead works (cf. Heb. 6:1, 9:14) then man has ‘a



consciousness of evil' (cf. Heb. 10:2, 22, Titus 1:15). Conscience is a tyrant. He is driven to prove himself by obeying the law; he fails to do so, and the conscience even more tyrannises him.

- (h) *Man is under the power of the Flesh.* Rom 8:11 and Col. 2:11–15 suggest man is under the power of the flesh by reason of his guilts, his sin. Flesh is his human nature as conditioned by sin. Flesh is incorrigible (Rom. 8:5–8).

Man obeys the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. He has his human reasoning which is against the wisdom of God and the truth. Thus man IS in a bondage from which he has no hope of extricating himself.

### The God of All Grace

God is called this in I Peter 5:10. It means there is no true grace but from God. Grace we know to be that action of God which we do not deserve. Grace is God going out to do man (undeserved) good. If it is simply a matter of law and justice man deserves only to suffer the outcome of his own sin. That is, he deserves to remain under the power of his deadly enemies.

Is grace an expedient to meet a contingency? It is axiomatic that the Cross (and Resurrection) is God's great act of grace. Rom. 3:23ff has it, '(although) all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forth as a Propitiation by his blood to be received by faith'. In Titus 2:11 Paul says, 'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation ...' It is clear that God expressed Himself as grace in the action of Christ. We have seen that the law – wonderful as it was – came by

Moses. but *and truth* by Jesus Christ. He became flesh and his glory and was beheld as the only Son of the Father, full of *grace and truth*. God's grace was no expedient to meet a (sudden) contingency. God was the God of grace before lie even began creating!

In Ephes. 1:3–7 Paul speaks of God's choice of His sons before creation, and His ultimate intention for them that they should be holy and blameless before Him. He adds, 'He predestined us, in love, to be his sons *through Christ Jesus*, according to the purpose of his will, to *the praise of his glorious grace* which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses *according to the riches of his grace*'. From this it may be seen: –

- (a) That God planned our sonship *before time*.
- (b) He planned it should come to be *in Christ*:
- (c) Such sonship would be an act of grace, ie. *God was the God of grace before time* and so comes through as the God of grace *in time*.
- (d) Grace was in sonship which comes through and with *the forgiveness of sins, ie. redemption*.

It is established then that grace was planned before time. II Tim. 1:9 says, 'God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus *ages ago* ('from eternity': Gk. *ap' aionos*)' In Isaiah 63:16 Israel says, ' ... thou, O Lord, art *our Father*} *our Redeemer* from eternity is thy name'.

Man then is forgiven his sins and redeemed from his enemies by the God who has ever been 'the God of all grace'. Man is restored as a creature of God.

The creation does not fail, and God's Creator is faithful. We will see more of this later.

### **Conclusion: God Is Liberator**

What of the Creation? What of the enemies? How is God the faithful Creator? The answer is that He has effectively defused the power of all evil forces. How has He done this? The answer is that all the manipulative power of evil over man lies in the fact of man's sin, and so, his guilt. Because of sin man is guilty and fears judgement, the wrath of God, death. He is under the tyranny of his conscience, and is subject to the punishment of the law. Had he not sinned, Satan, the world-powers, and the world-system would have no control of him. Because of the fear of death Satan keeps man all his life in bondage (Heb. 2:14-15). However the Cross deals with the totality of man's sin and his guilt. Man is set free. He is no longer under the judgement of the law. He has no need to fear death; sin, the sting of death has been removed (ie. sin and its penalty), and so neither Satan, his powers nor his system can hold a person who has had his conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God.

We have scarcely touched on all the implications of the Victory of the Cross. Various Scriptures tell us of the defeat of the enemies of man. However other Scriptures show us these evil powers were not only defused of their powers but also discredited. They show us that at the end time the victory of the Cross will be pressed to its ultimate and evil will be banished forever.

With this eschatological reckoning, and the positive glorification of all creation God has shown Himself to be 'faithful Creator.' However, in one sense, He cannot be Creator without being Redeemer. We know He redeems as Father, and redeems through His Son in that Father-Son relationship.

The utter defeat of evil, as the 'new heavens and the new earth' make it clear that He is, indeed, 'faithful Creator.'

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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### GOD THE GLORIFIER

#### Introduction: The Story of Glory

Without doubt the glory of God is one of the great themes of Scripture. Glory as a word conjures up thoughts of nobility, dignity, status, possessions, and is often thought of in visual terms of light, fire, brilliance and Splendour. In the O.T. its root idea is 'weight' or 'substance'. It has the note of enduring majesty and lasting reality.

We know that the very creation shows forth the glory of God. This can be seen by reference to Psalm 19:1f, to Romans 1:20, to the cry in Isaiah 6 'The whole earth is the fullness of His glory', as some translations have it. Ultimately the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord or the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Man himself, and the whole Creation of God will be glorified. Then He will prove indeed 'the faithful Creator'. However, let us trace the Story, simply, from beginning to end. Before we do so we ask the question, 'What is the glory of God?' The answer is that anyone's glory is his essential being, its true operations and genuine manifestations.

It has been argued that God is in some sense egotistical if He reveals His glory, as it were, for His own glory. In fact the glory which God manifests is what man needs to know. John suggests that only when we see Him will we (can we) be like Him. Man is made in the image of God, and is the glory of God (I Cor. 11:7), but he needs to

see that glory in order to enter into it fully. God's glory will do much for man and creation and the Great 'I AM' has no egotism such as we know it. He is love. He is the God of all grace. His holiness and righteousness exclude banal egoism.

#### The God of Glory: His Acts of Glory

When God wished to enlarge the thinking of Job, and to 'blow his mind' he began to ask that man whether he was at Creation. He sketched the majestic dimensions of that event and asked Job where he stood. Job, forced to think in wider dimensions admitted he had seen nothing like this. A true view of creation confirms Psalm 19:1 that the heavens declare the glory of God. Hence the Psalmist says, 'All thy works praise thee?.'

The glory of the Lord is a great theme in the O . T. One of the most powerful psalms (29) speaks of this glory and says, 'All in His temple cry, 'Glory!?' Acts 7:1 introduceg covenant history by saying, 'The God of glory appeared unto our forefather, Abraham'. This must mean that God is understood as the God of glory in His relationships with Abraham, and so, Israel. We have seen that everything has its basis in creation. To reject creation is to reject the glory of God. So Romans 1:21 says, 'They did not give to Him His glory as God'. That is they explained creation on other terms than the glory of God, Being made in the glory of God they perforce would have to reject that also. In denying the glory of God they denied the glory of man. Hence Paul's statement (Romans 3:23), 'All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.'

#### (i) Israel and Glory

The God of glory appeared to Abraham, and God was experienced and understood in that glory. The account in Genesis does not specifically speak

of such glory. Abraham has many experiences of God, but he believes God, and enters into covenant with Him. It may well be that the glory of God was recognised in many instances such as the covenant-making act of Genesis 15 and the offering up of Isaac in Ch.22. Isaac, perhaps, saw this glory. Jesus said, 'Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day, and he saw it and was glad'. This may have been the glory of the Cross-, of the offering similar to that of Isaac.

In Israel the glory of God was known. Moses saw the burning bush which was a theophany. The glory of the Lord was seen in the wilderness, in the pillar of cloud and fire that led them. He was seen in glory at Mt. Sinai, and on one occasion Moses asked to see all that glory, but was shown a little only of the whole (Exodus chs. 33– 34). However the glory was really the nature of the Lord Himself, ' .. gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty'. This was (is) the true glory of God. Later Paul, In Speaking of the privileges of Israel was able to say, 'To them belonged .. the glory ..' The tabernacle was filled with glory, and later Solomon's temple at its dedication.

As far back as Numbers 14:21 the statement was made that the whole earth would be filled with the glory of the Lord, a promise repeated by later prophets. Later in Ezekiel, the glory of the Lord which had been in Israel and which Ezekiel had seen in many visions, departed from the temple, and so, the land. Israel had lost the glory in exile. However, following the return it was said in Hag- gal 2 that the glory which the former temple had known would be exceeded by the glory the rebuilt temple would know. In Zechariah 2:5 God promises to Jerusalem, 'I will be the glory within her'.

Nevertheless Israel looked to a day of glory she had not yet known. In Isaiah 40 is the Promise of Israel restored and the voice cries in the wilderness saying, ' .. and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together, John claimed to be just this voice. Also in Isaiah is the Suffering Servant who will be a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people, Israel (Isaiah 42:6, cf. Luke 2:32). In fact all God's Sons and daughters are to portray His glory (43:6–7) and ultimately ? they shall declare my glory amongst all the nations?.

### (ii) Jesus and the Glory

'We beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth'. We have seen that the glory is the grace and truth. Law had been given through Moses but grace and truth through Christ. He was declaring the Father in this way. At the birth the glory of the Lord had shone upon the shepherds, So much so that the shepherds glorified God.

In the Synoptic Gospels little is said of Christ's earthly glory. In fact it is at the transfiguration that this glory alone, is seen. Then that is glory indeed. Moses and Elijah also appear in glory. However the glory is to do with the work of the Cross. Back at the temptation Jesus had refused the glory of all the kingdoms shown to him in a moment of time. The message of the transfiguration was 'He was transfigured that he might be disfigure, that e ho are disfigured might become transfigured This was the message of the Servant of Isaiah 52:14 – 53:12. In the same Gospels there is certainly mention of coming glory, but that is the apocalyptic return of the Son in the clouds of glory, but he calls it 'the glory of the Father' (Matt. 16:27, Mark 8:38) as though he is couched not in his own, but the glory of the Father. In Matt. 5:16 Jesus admonishes men to show forth

the glory of the Father.

In John's Gospel there is a full treatment of the theme of glory. It is always the glory of the Father. True, in John 2 at the miracle of the feast of Cana in Galilee Jesus shows his glory and his disciples believe on him. For the rest his glory is a revelation of the glory of the Father, that IS, as the Son obeys the Father he glorifies Him. Twice he speaks of not seeking his own glory but that of the Father (7:18, 8:50). In the raising of Lazarus the glorifying of the Father will also be the glorifying of the Son, but the Father is Primary (11:4, 11:40). In 1-2:12-32 see the event when the Greeks came to Christ to see him. The Cross is very evident in his thinking, and it seems, as some have said, 'a Johannine Gesthemene'. Certainly he is troubled but desires the Father to be glorified. The Father says He has been and He will be. In the 13th chapter the coming of the crucifixion is to glorify the Father but also the Son. In chapter 17 Jesus is deeply occupied with showing the glory of the Father through his death. He requests the full glory of the Father for this event, explaining that he has glorified God by his acts of obedience, and this is the act beyond all other acts. At the same time he longs for his disciples to be with him in the Father's presence and to see his glory which the Father has given him before the making of creation.

Jesus himself is raised from the dead by *the glory of the Father* (Rom. 6:4), and in John 20:17 anticipates going to the Father. Is he risen but not glorified? This theme is not taken up. However, in his ascension a cloud receives him out of their sight, and this must be the shekinah glory, the cloud of His presence. He will come back in the same cloud of glory (Acts 1:11), ie. the glory of the Father. We should not let the visual symbols keep us from the reality. The Son was always with the Father hence the Father raises

him, and ascends him, and seats him at his own right hand in glory. The glory of the Son is that he is above everything, and with the Father. He has all honour (glory) and authority. This is what Stephen sees at his moment of martyrdom (Acts 7:55). It is when he comes that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

### (iii) The Children and Glory

The N . T. is greatly taken up with the glorification of man. As in the Genesis account so in I Cor 11:7 man is the image and glory of Go, However, having fallen short of his (created) glory, man is brought to glory by the redemption of Christ. In I Cor. 2:6ff Paul Speaks of 'a secret and hidden wisdom which God decreed before the ages *for our glorification* He says such glorification is bewilderingly wonderful, since such has never been seen, heard, or Imagined, and only the Spirit can reveal its wonder. This is why in Romans 8:18ff Paul says that the suffering of the present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. All creation waits in anguish longing for this. Man, even redeemed man, he who has the rich first fruits of the Spirit, he too anguishes for this glory. God is working in all things for the Ultimate good of those who love Him in order to Conform them to the image (glory) of His Son. This accords with I John 3:1-3 where the sons are told they will be like him when they see him, Philippians 3:21 (cf. I Cor. 15.51ff) 'speaks of having the body of humiliation changed so that it will be like 'his body of glory'. The Corinthian passage speaks of the body being sown in mortality but raised in immortality, sown in dishonour but raised in glory.

All of this must surely spring from Isaiah 43:6-7 where God calls His sons and daughters from afar whom He has created and made for His glory.

In Ephesians 1:3–14 these redeemed will be ‘holy and blameless’. They will be sons. They will be to the praise of the glory of His grace, and then to the Praise of His glory, that is they will be in His likeness, and Portray the glory of the Father. In fact in Ephesians 1:17 God Is called ‘the Father of glory’, and whilst this could mean simply the creator of glory, it must be more. It must mean that He fathers the glory of His Son, and so of His children, His entire Household and Family.

At the same time many passages (cf. Isaiah 11, Romans 8:18–25) tell us that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. The very creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption (mortality, decay) and released into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. In other words, the whole creation will be glorified

At least for the children of God that will not simply be a climactic event, but a consummating event. Right now the children are being ‘changed from one stage of glory to another’ (II Cor. 3:18). Hence none of their suffering is lost. In fact if they suffer with him (the Son) then they will be glorified with him. The suffering is an investment but It is not the cost of glorification So much as it is the way. By suffering one grows in (true) glory. Hence Paul claims that ‘our light momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory’ (II Cor. 4:17). This is stunning for it reveals the intention of the Father. His glory will cover the earth because (a) The whole earth will be glorified and (b) The whole people, His household, will be glorified and as such will show the glory of the Father, since who can show that Father–glory but the Son, and the sons, ie. the whole family? It has always been the intention of the Father ‘to bring many sons into glory’ (Heb. 2:10) but such is not Possible without the Cross, and then without the ministry of the Spirit who is himself the ‘Spirit of glory’ (I Peter 4:14). He

rests on them in the context of suffering.

### **Conclusion: The Father of Glory Succeeds**

In our last study we saw that by redeeming through the Son the Father has liberated His creation from the power of evil. Here we see that His Fatherhood planned not only redemption but the glorification of His creatures and creation. It is stunning that out of the chaos of sin and rebellion, and the hatred and hostility shown to God the ultimate emerges, the glorified family of the eternal Father, each member totally in the image of the Son of His love. In this sense, too, He is the faithful Creator. This is His glory – that what He has planned He has accomplished.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### GOD THE RE-CREATOR

#### Introduction: God Has Created

The term ‘faithful Creator’ of I Peter 4:19 must mean that God does not neglect His creation. He must –

- (a) Maintain the *fixed order* (*Jer.* 31:35–36, *Psalm* 89:36–37) so that creation is not a bewildering disorder.
- (b) *Sustain*, ie. uphold and provide for the life and operations of the creation (cf. *Col.*1:17, *Heb.*1:3, Sermon on the Mount, *Psalm* 104, etc.).
- (c) Bring His creation to the goal He has set for it. This presupposes there is a plan for creation, and that it is not intended that it merely go on Continually, or have no goal. We have seen something of this fact in our last study on glorification. Glorification has the elements of success, ie. of bringing the creation to maturation.

If somewhere in the history of creation there is a ‘fall’ or a hiatus, or creation is led away from Its functional creation then the Creator’s ‘faithfulness’ is put in doubt. Even if He could restore creation it would have to be shown that the fall or hiatus or dislocation was, in fact, an essential element in its ultimate maturation or success.

### The Initial Order of Creation

As we have observed from such passages as *Gen* 1:31, *I Tim.* 4:4, *Eccles.* 3:11, *Psalm* 104, the creation was initially functional, complete and perfect. The rebellion of Satan and his angelic followers, together with the rebellion of man has brought about a moral change. Such rebellion demands, on the part of the forces of evil and fallen man, an explanation of why they do not acknowledge God and operate in His creation in a truly functional (ie. moral) way. Evil has then to re-rationalise the whole creation and give it a different rationale from its essential one. It has to create a different ‘world-view’, and so on. Hence the deceit of evil, and the making of many religions and philosophies. These rationalisations are not merely intellectual. They determine the action and ‘life-styles’ of evil powers and man. Hence *Romans* 1:18 speaks of men suppressing the truth in acts of unrighteousness, whilst numerous passages speak of the deceit of Satan, his powers, the world, the flesh and so on. Whilst the *essential* nature of creation cannot be changed, yet it can be dislocated, distorted and Perverted, which is what *Romans* 1:21–32 shows so clearly. Has then God been defeated by evil opposition, and has He in fact failed to be a faithful Creator?

We have the further problem. Does the so-called ‘physical’ creation have some direct relationship with the moral structure of creation? In *Hosea* 4:1–3 the prophet shows the moral behaviour of the people relates to their knowledge (or lack of the knowledge) of God. He shows that the state of the land derives from their evil. This is supported by *Hosea* 6:1–3. It is clearly typified in *Isaiah* 32:11–20, and *Isaiah* 35. Moral regeneration of God’s people will bring actual regeneration of the land.

### The 'Fall' of The Creation

Did the creation fall with (a) The rebellion of Satan, and (b) The rebellion of man? We can say definitely that the rebellion of evil powers *affected* the creation, since its true functional use was perverted by evil. For example whilst God has given us all things richly to enjoy and whilst everything created by God is good, yet all things now become the object of lusting under the Perverted showing of evil. Man, as the lord of his creation has a responsibility to govern it well. His government has become Perverted. He exploits, uses and manipulates for his own benefit. In this sense creation has not fallen but has been subjected to wrong elements of leadership, use, etc. In Romans 8:18–25 Paul makes it clear that –

- (a) The creation never fell of itself. It never rebelled against God or the order He had given it. When we say 'creation' we except the moral evil powers and rebellious man.
- (b) The creation was subjected to futility (frustration, emptiness). It could not fully express and fulfil it self. Mainly it was under the bondage of decay and corruption.
- (c) This bondage was to be temporary. One day it would be released, ie. when elect man would be glorified. This shows *the creation's dependence upon the moral state of man.*

We can say then that moral (or, immoral) rebellion affects the state of creation, but cannot alter its essential nature. The creation came under bondage but did not, itself, will to do evil.

### God The Re–Creator

In the promises of the New Covenant and the

'new' Kingdom, Israel was to know regeneration. Passages such as Isaiah 32, 35, Jer. 31:31–34, Ezekiel 36:24–28, 37:1–14, amongst many others speak of physical renewal within Israel, and of a moral transformation in the hearts of the children of Israel themselves. Some of these statements are in very . terms. In Isaiah 32 and 35 the moral transformation of the people is accompanied by (or, results in) the physical transformation of the land.

However, what is most powerful is the inner transformation of the people of God. In Ezekiel 37 it is the making of dry and Scattered bones into whole resurrected persons. In Jer. 31:31–34 it is effecting a total moral change within the heart. In Ezekiel 36:24–28 it is giving man a new heart and a new spirit In all cases it is bringing the people to be obedient to the law of God *from the heart.*

In passages such as Isaiah 11:6–9, Isaiah 65:17ff, and 66:22–23 there is a Whole new age predicted. The question to be considered is, 'Is this act of recreating the bringing into being of an entirely new and different creation, or is it a renewing of what has already been created?'

### Man, The New Creation

In order to understand *regeneration* we must understand *generation* The creation accounts speak of generation as satisfactory and flawless. God then does not need to abandon that original generation In fact, Biblically, He sustains it. However it is what that creation is in its relationship to the Creator which determines what He may (or, will) do with it. We mean that God originates man 's Father–Creator, so that man is son–creature (cf. Luke 3:38, Acts 17:28, etc.). Would a recreation then mean that God had abandoned His original intent for man, or that in fact this was to



be His way of fulfilling that intention? The purposive passages of Ephes. 1:3–14, 3:1–11, 1 Cor. 2:6–14, II Tim. 1:9, I Peter 1:2, 20 all show that God had planned prior to creation the ultimate renewal of creation, or the fulfilment of His creational purposes, ie. the glorification of man and the universe without rejecting the original functional nature and principles He had given to it.

### (i) Regeneration within time

In Matthew 19:28 Jesus speaks about ‘the regeneration?’ or ‘the new world’. He means ‘the regeneration of creation’. The initial creation will be renewed. This will be at his coming. However in Titus 3:5 Paul speaks of ‘the washing of regeneration’ and relates this to ‘the renewal of the Holy Spirit’. In fact they may even be equated, in a sort of parallelism. Regeneration then, happens in time. It has to happen since John 1:11–13 infers that until a man is born of God he cannot be a child of God. Likewise in John 3:3–14 it is clear that the man born of ordinary physical birth cannot *see let alone enter the Kingdom of God* until he has spiritual birth, ie. a birth in addition to his natural birth, and virtually a re-birth. The same verb relating to new birth or second birth is used in John 1:13, I John 2:29, 3:9, 5:1, 4, 18. The word ‘to beget again’ is used in I Peter 1:3, 23. I Cor. 2:14 says, ‘the natural (psychical) man does not receive the things of the Spirit because they are foolishness to him.’ Man needs spiritual renewal. Jude 19 speaks of men who are ‘natural (“psychical”), devoid of the Spirit?’. In II Cor. 5:16–17 Paul speaks of a man being ‘a new creation’ (cf. Gal. 6:15) and in Ephesians 2:15 and 4:24 of a new man or a new humanity (anthropos). The word ‘renewal’ (of the Holy Spirit) in Titus 3:5 is the same term used in Romans 12:2 ‘the renewing of the mind’. In Ephes. 2:5 the term ‘to make alive with (Christ)’ is used (cf. Col. 2:13).

Out of all this we can see that fallen man is unable to understand the things of God primarily because his attitude is fixed against God. He has what Paul calls in Romans 8 ‘the mind-set of the flesh’ as against ‘the mind-set of the Spirit’. He needs the action of God *to* renew him. When, practically, we look at a person who has experienced this new birth, or this renewing birth, this regeneration, then we see that whereas everything has changed, in another sense nothing essential has changed, excepting of course the attitude or direction of the will. The mind-set is now that of the Spirit. We mean there is no physical change, no change in the capacities of the person, but a change in orientation which effectively alters the whole life-style *of* the person. He does not become a different person, but a renewed person, and that is as a new person. This is the *new heart* of Ezekiel 36 and Jeremiah 31. The person is alive (cf. Ephes 2:5, Col. 2:13). II Cor. 5:15 indicates that he has died to what he was and become alive to God.

Agents and aides in this change are the Spirit and the Word. (See I Peter 1:23, – cf. Romans 10:17 – John 1:18, 1 Cor. 2:6–14, John 3:3ff) We take it that the Word is not simply the Bible, but the living Word, Christ, who is Communicated in his work and power through the uttered word, especially as it is spoken through the Spirit.

Whilst the initial renewing process puts man in a different category than he had been in prior to regeneration, it is also clear that the process, of regeneration continues, especially in the process of sanctification. We see then that man does not have to wait until the end of time to be obedient. He has a new drive for obedience (cf. II Cor. 5:14, John 14:15, I John 4:19). No one can compute the chaos and anguish as well as the desperation and desolation of the unregenerated heart and life. The contrast of the new person is of vast dimensions.

God as Father has worked to effect this change with His creation. The object of that re-generating work will only know *by faith* what God has done. He will have to wait until the eschaton to see its full effects.

Paul warns against ‘judging by the flesh’ in II Cor. 5:16 for he says (v.17) ‘that if any man is in Christ he is a new creation’. Hence, as in Jer. 31:33–34 the new heart shows itself in new obedience, so the heart of Ezek. 36:24–28. It obeys. This plea for a new heart is that of David in Psalm 51:10: ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me (‘Renew a right spirit within me’)

### (ii) Regeneration at the End of Time

What we have discussed under ‘glorification’ is the completion of regeneration. The creation which has been subjected to futility is released from it right at that Point where elect mankind is glorified (Rom. 8:18–25). II Peter speaks of the elements being dissolved with fire, –which is a Biblical picture of purification by fire (cf. Isaiah 4:4, Matt. 3:11–12). ‘The heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire (11 Peter 3:10–12)!’ The effects of this will be ‘new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness’ (v. 13). This is the regeneration of which Christ speaks in Matt. 19:28. It is the new heavens and earth promised in Isaiah 66:22, and which is described in Revelation chs. 21–22. All futility will have vanished, and all corruption will cease. All evil will have been banished and destroyed, and the new age will come to pass in fullness.

### Conclusion: The Creator’s Triumph

The brethren (the saints of the Kingdom) are accused day and night by the old Serpent the devil.

In fact they are accused by Satan in the sight of the throne (Rev. 12:10), but they overcome Satan by the blood of the Cross. When justification takes place no one can legitimately accuse for it is God who justifies, The miracle of history is regeneration. Right in this world where evil keeps up its action of attempted lying and deceit, the brethren are holy. The Holy Father has planned His children be holy, and they are. They are not only credited with sanctification, but they live in that sanctification because of regeneration, Whilst it is continually contested by evil, yet to oppose Satan, firm in the faith is to cause him to flee!

The fact of whether or not God is a faithful Creator is resolved by the truth that He has made new creatures, here, in this world, of His elect. What they are will appear in that new age, but they belong to the new age. The regeneration at the end of time of the whole creation will not suddenly regenerate the elect, but simply consummate their regeneration already in operation, God has in no way failed to be a faithful Creator. Without the moral struggle they can scarcely know what grace is, much less understand that the path to glory is suffering, In the ultimate they can only deeply understand God through the fact of suffering, for the Cross is the true badge of His life. He shall see that fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and the end result, the new heavens and the new earth, and the new people will vindicate His faithfulness as Creator, Father, and Redeemer.

This is the true work of the Father. In no other way can His children be conformed fully into the image of His own Son.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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### THE FATHER AND HIS FAMILY

#### Introduction: The Father and The Way To Him

We have seen that God was the Father of His Son before creation, and that in creation He created, using the agency of the Son and the Spirit. In this sense creation was a paternal–filial thing. We have seen that man was made in the image of God – the full Godhead. Thus there must be in man correlative elements which pertain to Fatherhood and Sonship. We also saw that the Father planned the family, the household, the new community – before time. It was to come into being in time, and be completed by the end of time.

In the O.T. there are intimations of His Fatherhood, especially of Israel. It is with the coming of the (prophesied) Son that His Fatherhood unfolds. This is because the Son reveals Him (John 1:14, 18, Matt. 11:27, John 14:6–10, 5:11ff, etc.). The Son reveals Him by living out the Son–to–Father relationship before them, and also by such direct teaching as the Sermon on the Mount, and Johannine teaching about the Father. That is, he shows the glory of the Father by who he is, what he says, and the acts he does. Finally he shows the love of the Father–hood in and by the Cross.

#### (i) The Son is the Way

Men and women can now come to the Father through him, the Son. He is the *only* way but then no more ‘ways’ are needed for he is *wholly the way*. *He* is not simply the way to God, but the way to *God as Father*. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus

does not seek to bring them to the Father. If they are truly the people of God then they are truly the children of God. Even with the disciples he assumes they know. ‘Where I go *you know* and the way *you know*’. It is true that they are Surprised, but he tells them he himself is the way, and if they have observed him, believed and accepted him, then they have come to the Father.

#### (ii) The Spirit brings to, and through, the way

In John 16:12–15 Jesus says the Spirit will take the things which are his and show them to the disciples. The things which are the Father’s things are also his things. Hence to be shown the Son is to be shown the Father. In John 17:3 and I John 5:20 this is eternal life. In Gal. 4:46 Paul shows that the Son comes to bring redemption, but even more to bring to sonship (adoption). Then the Father sends the Holy Spirit as ‘the Spirit of His Son’ into the hearts of believers, and the Spirit is crying ‘Abba!’, ie. ‘Father!’ which means believers cry, as did Jesus cry, ‘Father!’ So they have come by the Son, assisted by the Spirit.

In Matthew 28:18–20 baptism is into the ‘name of’ the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The word ‘name’ is not in the plural. It is one name. To be immersed in this name is to have all the creational correlatives with Father, Son, and Spirit met and fulfilled. One is *in the* Father, *in the* Son, and *in the* Spirit, and the latter is the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son (Matt. 10:20, Gal. 4:6). Hence the new son ship of the sons is a most powerful thing. No wonder it conditions to love., purity and the sense of familyhood.

#### The Importance of The Fatherhood

Under regeneration we saw that the regenerating act powerfully changes the person. We saw this is done by the Word and the Spirit so that

a radical change takes place. It is a change in depth. To come to the Father means one is (a) A son, and (b) A brother (sister) amongst the brethren of the family. The family is the context in which a regenerated person lives. It is essential to him. I Peter 1:19–20 with Rev. 13:8 (cf. Luke 10:20, Rev. 20:15) make it clear that the family is the community planned *as a community before* creation. This is verified by Ephes. 1:3–5, 3:1–11, and I Cor. 2:6–10. If we consider that the whole family is under the Father (cf. Ephes. 3:14–15, 4:6) then we can see that true being lies in being sons of God and brethren in the family. Out of this can come true personal growth and maturity.

Negatively this is underlined by *the family of evil*. John refers to it in I John 3:10ff. He shows that Cain was a child of the Evil One. He shows Abel was a child of God. In John 8:37–44 Jesus shows that as true sonship of Abraham is proved by reflecting the character of Abraham, so being children Satan is shown by reflecting him, that is by doing his will and desires and lying as did he. This is in contrast to the child of God who does what his Father requires, and who tells the truth.

We see, then that the message of the Gospel pertains primarily to God as Father, and His Son as Son and lard.

### The Importance of The Sonship

In Hebrews 2:10–17 it is shown that the Father brings ‘many sons into glory’ by the Son. He is the pioneer or trail-blazer of their salvation. The statement, ‘For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why ‘he is not ashamed to call them brethren’ must mean that the Son, who sanctifies, and the children who are sanctified all have ‘one Parent’, ie. God as Father.

This unusual statement is followed by a quote from Psalm 22:22, ‘I will proclaim (tell) thy name to my brethren •.’ This is exactly what Christ did. He told the Name of the Father. This is seen in John 17:6, 26. That name was not a mere appellation but the name ‘Father’. Hence without the Son, as we see in Matt. 11:27, there is no knowledge of God *as Father*. Hence having declared the Name, and being ‘of one origin?’ he can speak of ‘the children God has given me’ (cf. Isaiah 8:17–18). It is into this very Name that the children are baptised.

The Son then is greatly important. Not only does he lead to the Father, but he has Lordship within the community. As Messiah (Son of God) of the Kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13) he exercises Lordship over the people of God. In one way of looking at it he is the Elder Brother. We can work back from the O. T. Economy where the elder brother was closest to the father, and received the double-portion of the inheritance because of his work and responsibility. Elder brothers such as Cain, Ishmael and Esau all failed in their responsibility. This Elder Brother is the High-Priest to his brethren. Also he is head over the house (Heb. 3:1–6) which follows on from his salvific and intercessory ministry. So we look to this Elder Brotherhood to find what is the true type. It is the Son in the house (as against the slave within it) who can liberate and make other brethren (cf. John 8:34–36, Heb. 3:1–6).

This functional situation has to be seen clearly to understand the structured nature of the Family or Household. In I Cor. 8:6 Paul says, ‘For us there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.?’ So ‘Father and Lord’. In Matthew 23:1–10 there is one Father, and one Master (the Christ). In Ephes. 4:4–6 the family has its unity through the Spirit but there is *one Lord* (Christ) and *one Father*. So it is impossible to have the family

(a) Come into being and (b) Function as the family without (a) Submission to the Father, and (b) Obedience to the Son as the Lord. In Phil. 2:9–11 and I Cor. 15:24–28 the same order can be observed – the Son accomplishes to the glory of the Father.

## The Nature of Familyhood Under The Father

### (i) The essential Fatherhood

In chapter eight we saw the nature of the family in that Father and sons constitute the family, and love and holiness are two necessary marks of the family. These elements are Supplemented by the action of the Family, that is the children doing the will of the Father, that will being to proclaim deliverance to the rest of mankind, and to preach the Kingdom where it has not been heard.

Now we will try to work out some of these elements in the light of their importance and indispensability. To do this we must see the nature of the Father. Two significant passages are Ephes. 3:14–15 and Ephes. 4:6. The first has been strongly debated. Is it speaking of God being the Father of the whole family of creation, so that everything is included? Is it speaking in particular of the family of the elect, or is it saying that principally fatherhood, or, familyhood derive from the Father, wherever they may be found? Well, possibly it is saying all those things. What does emerge, however, is that wherever familyhood obtains its *authentic source* is the Father. Every family would be rich family-wise by drawing upon the Father. Another way of saying it is, ‘When God is head over any family, there true Familyhood will be found because of the true Fatherhood’. This would presuppose the true Sonship also. Likewise in Ephes. 4:6 is the Father above, through and in all members of the (Christian) family, or is He through

*all things* as well as in and above them? If the latter then the former is included. Our point in looking at these passages is not merely to extend the Fatherhood to all creation or to limit it to the household of God, but to say that wherever He is acknowledged and obeyed there *is true familyhood because of true Fatherhood*.

### (ii) The essential Familyhood

The Father being there, the family exists in truth. It derives its being from the Father. It also derives its life from the Father. *He is above all* – that is He is in authority. Authority is essential for the protection, the guidance, the direction and the providence of the family. Under authority they can be taught, trained and matured. *He is through all*. That is He relates to all members, and is present for all acts and operation<sup>5</sup>, as well as for all relationship<sup>5</sup>. He is not a remote Father-hood. The family is wrought upon to be relational. *He is in all things*. That is, nothing has its existence apart from Him. He dwells in all things, that is in all members of the family. This is intimacy, but intimacy which both inspires and restrains. Hence, in the context Paul can speak of those things which make for unity within the Family.

Having then the continual presence of the Father, as also the Son, the elements of which we have Spoken – love, holiness and action – are very Powerfully motivated. Indeed it is difficult to see how they can be absent. John’s epistles, especially the first, cannot rightly be understood without the presupposition that the people of God are His family and relate to Him as Father. Hence to say you love God and hate your brother is to make you a liar. To know God as Father is to know the other person as the child of God and your brother. He who loves the parent loves the child. Likewise to view a needy man without helping him when you have the means is to deny the essential nature

of love. God so loves that He gives. We must so love that we give. It is difficult to express fully and powerfully the enormous thrust of being a child of the Father and a brother of the Messiah. As we have seen, no one has to teach another brotherly love because the Father Himself teaches that – just by being Father; just by making us His sons!

When this comes to obedience to the Father, and doing His will, and praying that His will be done, then the obedience passes beyond mere legalism, and beyond even initial discipleship (learning as pupils). It passes into that realm described by Jesus very Powerfully in John 14:10–15. Here the children or brethren of Christ are to do what he does and even greater works! This compulsion which comes from relating to the Father gives no place for disobedience. The thrust of love to obey the Father is very strong and deep, yet it is not an excruciating pain or power. It is the drive which comes from knowing we are the sons of the living God. Outside of such a powerful relationship the demands, say, of II Cor. 6:14 – 7:1 would develop into harsh legalism. As it is they are the directives of the Father for a joyous operation, and a wonderful goal. Likewise the various demands within the Sermon on the Mount become a hard legalism without the relationship of the Father above, through and in His children.

### **(iii) The powerful drive of Filial Hope**

John in his epistle strongly emphasises the present nature of the family. At the same time he introduces the motivation of hope. This is seen in I John 3:1–3. What we will be we know – as the perfect Son! Yet we cannot grasp fully now just what he is, but we know we will be like him when we see him. So knowing he is pure we seek to be pure. If that principle is applied to every other

known element of the Son then it causes us to seek to be like him in obedience, in accomplishment, in love, and so on.

Again it is not an individualistic drive to personal sonship, but rather the drive for full familyhood. As John says, ‘Our fellowship is first with the Father and the Son and so (then) with the brethren’. This impels us to walk in light, to walk in love, not to hate, and it impels us to do works of righteousness. Another way of saying this is that we wish to align with the nature of things as they really are, especially because God is Father over all.

### **Conclusion: The Family Is All**

We have seen from many angles that the family is a fine institution of God, but then knowing the nature of God, essentially, as Father we are moved to see that the family is the central element of His plan and purpose. This makes membership within the family a responsible matter. It also heightens the wonder of being a human being, especially being a redeemed and filiated human being.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE FATHER

#### Introduction: The Unfolding Revelation

We have spoken of the fact that whatever may have been the knowledge of God which newly created man (Adam) Possessed, yet Romans 1:20ff points out that such revelation (which could be seen in and through creation) was rejected. The Old Testament speaks of something of the Father- hood of God being known to Israel. However, full and comprehensible revelation awaited the coming of the Son. In fact the event of the Baptism was quite extraordinary that God should say audibly that Jesus was His Son. All that was Sonship in the O.T. passed to Jesus (cf. Hosea 11:1, Matt. 2:14f), but he gave revelation beyond that. His baptism, temptation, ministry, cross and resurrection all have to do with Son ship (especially as they refer to Psalm 2). However, at the Cross we have seen that the revelation of the Father as love is made known. We have also seen that Jesus for the first time calls the disciples 'my brethren'. Romans 1:4 (cf. Acts 13:33) says that the resurrection attests his Sonship. In Hebrews 1:1-5 it is the ascension which attests this.

What we really mean is that God as Father is revealed in an entirely new way by the Son. The Father attests him as Son, but the Son reveals him as Father. By the time of the epistles the revelation is as complete as it can be in this age. Some- thing quite brilliant, and richly advanced upon the O.T. is seen in the N.T. We remind ourselves that God does not begin to be Father in the N.T.

but He does become revealed as Father In a wonderful way.

### The Many Implications Of Revealed Fatherhood

It will be Impossible to deal with all the implications In this short study. We can but indicate some.

#### (i) History is Purposeful: God has His Plan

Just to know that God is sovereign In His universe Is conducive to serenity. His is the plan of Creator-Redeemer-Father. Ephes. 1:5-7, I Cor. 2:6-10, Rom. 8:30, and I John 3:1-3 make it clear that much of the plan relates to the elect becoming the sons of God in the image of the Son. The consummation of history Is the 'unveiling of the sons of God' as they enter into 'the glorious liberty of the children of God', God's plan is to glorify the members of His community.

#### (ii) God is King: His community is the Kingdom

It Is more correct to say that the Kingdom is God's sovereign rule. Yet He rules over men and other creatures. John Promised the Kingdom was imminent. Jesus encouraged his disciples, 'Fear not, little flock. It is the *Father's good pleasure* to give you the Kingdom.? At the last Supper he says, 'I appoint You a kingdom, as *my Father* appointed me a Kingdom.? He speaks of the eschaton when he will say, 'Come O *Blessed of my Father*, Inherit *the Kingdom prepared for you* from the foundation of the world.'

Of course the Father Is King, and we pray for His will to be done on earth and (thus) His Kingdom to come. We pray, 'Our Father'. The implication is that the Kingdom must never be understood in less than Paternal-filial terms.

### (iii) Forgiveness is part of the Father's Work

Matt.18:21ff gives us a well-formed view of forgiveness. Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of heaven is like ...' and went on to speak about the king forgiving his indebted servant. Forgiven, the servant must forgive his fellow servant, or the king will be angry.

Matt. 26:28 speaks of the Cross as the means of the forgiveness of sins. The epistles speak of forgiveness as a great event, if not the greatest event. Hence Ephes. 1:7 and Col. 1:14 can speak of 'the forgiveness of sins' as though It were total, an event of God not needing *to be repeated*. Forgiveness must be instant; it must be constant (Col. 3:13, Ephes. 4:32, Matt. 18:22). It would be impossible to assess the dynamic of forgiveness, both from God to man, and man to his fellow man.

This must also be related to the work of the Son (who is in the household of God) in liberating his people from the power of their sins, so that they may be freemen in the house.

### (iv) The importance of the Son's Revelation

With our knowledge of the Scriptures and 2,000 years of accumulated study and theology it is difficult for us to appreciate, in a fresh way, the *wonder of* the revelation of the Father. When we realise the Son was the mediator of creation then we must realise, as it were, that 'We have passed through his hands,' ie. that in some sense he has already 'processed' us. The creation must be Paternal-Filial in structure. To come, then, to God as Father must be man's highest moment, his most significant experience. In this sense he discovers his identity. He discovers Who God is, and – equally important – Who and What He is not! We have seen that His forgiveness reveals His love, and that man's love is responsive to His (active) love (I John 4:19).

With the revelation of His Fatherhood is necessarily

His revelation of man's sonship, man's people-hood, his familyhood, and the nature of the household of God Himself. He has a house. If we link this with the Paternal-Filial nature of creation then we discover the Biblical world-view. We align this with the Paternal-Filial redemption, and the ultimate Paternal-Filial glorification of man and his universe. Thus we see that the powerful dynamic *of* love is allied with the powerful dynamic of hope, and faith is the form of trust we have in this God who has revealed Himself to us as Father. He has a good end for His people. This is powerful present motivation for truly ethical living.

### (v) The Lordship of Christ His revelation of

The Lordship of Christ must not be seen apart from the Kingdom of God. He is Messiah-King of the Kingdom. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. He has died and risen for this Lordship (cf. Rom. 14:9, 10:9, etc.). God as Father-King cannot be known fully, or truly, apart from the Son-King (Psalm 2:6ff, Col. 1:13) As Messiah he is Son of God. As his people ('Messiah-ites?') we are involved in his programme of ruling and conquering. Lordship then is not a finicky legalistic demand on his part, but a demand for full obedience ('the obedience of faith'), which is given because of His redeeming love, and liberating forgiveness.

To be members of the Kingdom – sons of the Kingdom', sons of the covenant', 'sons of the prophets' – is to be involved in the prophetic work of Christ (Rev. 19:10 – 'The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy').

### (vi) The evocation of repentance His revelation of

Repentance (Gk. *metanoia*: change of mind or attitude) is not a work but a gift. From n's point of view it is the use of the gift God has given (Acts 5:31, 11:18).



Since man has rejected the true nature of God and relationship with Him, how then will man repent? God gives the gift. It is significant in various contexts how the *Fatherhood of God* itself is evocative of repentance. This is seen clearly in the story of the prodigal, when that son remembers, 'In my father's house .'. The fatherhood calls him home, in repentance. In Acts 17:24–30 Paul unfolds the Fatherhood, and shows the Stupidity of idolatry as man's alternative. He says (because Christ has come) 'God now commands all men everywhere to repent'. Again the thief on the Cross repents when he hears the cry, 'Father!' That must have been a revelation. The forgiveness that went with Fatherhood must also have impressed him to repentance.

We have seen that the revelation of Fatherhood comes primarily through what the Son effects, namely redemption Gal. 4:4–6 speaks of coming to the Father, but the first step is to take the fruits of redemption. The *goal* of redemption is sonship '.. that we might receive the sonship'. Hence one not only repents. One brings forth the fruits of repentance (Acts 26:18). This repentance in one sense is a basic never-to-be-repeated event. In another sense one is always living consistent with that repentance It would be difficult to assess how powerful Is this implication for human living.

### **(vii) Community Life and Relationships**

In Galatians 6 Paul says, 'Do good *unto all men*, and chiefly unto them who are of *the household of God*'. Scripture would teach us (a) There is the family of Adam, even though in Adam all die (b) There is the household of God. By Adam we are all brethren, in some sense, and we have obligations of love to all the world (Matt. 5:43–48). When we come to the brethren within the Father's household there is surely a warm domestic life.

There is great obligation to love. As we have seen, all relationships pertain to the Father's love, and the love of the Son. The Spirit is the 'Go-Between? member of the Godhead.

Love makes for rich and loving relationships which are in the context of continual forgiving of one another. These relationships can be considered under two heads:–

#### *(a) The Unity of the People of God.*

It is to God's Fatherhood Jesus appeals in John 17. He prays in verse 20 and following, 'I pray that they may be one, Father, as thou art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us . perfectly one'. The relationship of the Son and the Father is not only the measuring stick for the people of God, but the Source of unity. Much is made of the unifying work of the Cross (Ephes. 2:11–22), and in Ephes. 4:1–6 the unity of the Spirit is wrought by the powerful elements of unity such as 'one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one Spirit, one God and Father ..' In John's epistles this love-in-unity is his paramount theme. In I Cor. chs. 12 – 14 the gifts and love work together to make this love-unity.

#### *(b) Relationships in Life.*

We mean by this that our relation ships in life stem from God as Father. Ephesians 3:14–15 indicate that the source of familyhood – in the widest and narrowest senses – is the Father. At the same time (Ephes. 3:17) the Son must dwell in the heart by faith. John has the same idea in ch.1 of his first letter. 'Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son'. Why not, since all have been baptised into them? He then writes these things so that all may have fellowship, together. In the Scriptures we find that God is the source

of all relationships. If we may talk of archetypes then the Father is that of (and for) all fathers Like wise the Son for all Son ship, and at the same time he is the archetypal Elder Brother, for all brotherhood. He is also the true Bridegroom and Husband. His bride, the church is also the fruit bearing ‘mother of us all’ (Gal. 4:24–31, Rev. 19:6ff, 21:9ff). The family of the Father in one sense derives from the Father–Son relationship, and in another is the true family of God.

Hence when we come to the working out of human relationships we have such statements as I Tim. 5:1–2, ‘Do not rebuke an older man but treat him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.’ These categories are well known. Even the elders within the godly community are as fathers and leaders. So the Fatherhood of God has deep implications for authority (‘... Father, above all’) in all spheres as it has for love in all spheres, including the love that truly chastises and disciplines (Heb. 12:5ff).

#### **(viii) The Working of Obedience**

The Lord’s prayer speaks of an obedience that is in relationship to the King–Father. Paul’s term ‘the obedience of the nations’ (Rom. 1:5, 15:18f, 16:25–26), is what Jesus demands of those baptised into the Name of the Father, Son and Spirit. However, Jesus’ exposition of this obedience was in word (John 5:17ff) but primarily by what he did. Fatherhood calls us to the same obedience. Revelation 21:7 indicates that. The one who overcomes is a son of God. Obedience is not primarily the keeping of moral law (although it includes that) or religious worship (it involves that!) but it is doing the will which is at once the outworking of Messiah’s ministry and the plan of the Father. For such obedient ones the Father has prepared the Kingdom,

and they are ‘blessed of my Father’. They are the sons of the Kingdom suffering for it (II Thess. 1:1–5, etc.). They will hear ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servants. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’. They will enter the Father’s house, be given a dwelling place commensurate with their personal being, and they shall see Him ‘face to face’ (Rev. 22:4).

#### **Conclusion: An Unfinished Subject**

It must be patent to all who have done this course how lightly we have touched upon the subject. It must be seen that the material is of such proportions as to defy neat categorising and arrangement. Yet this very prodigality of material is a rich testimony (not to the laziness of the human mind, but) to the vast and wonderful dimensions of the subject of God ‘s Fatherhood.

Best of all is not merely to study that subject, but to live in that full and rich personal relationship – with the Father