

The Heavenly Calling Foreshown

by John Gifford Bellett

The sermon explores the profound implications of the heavenly calling for the church, contrasting it with Israel's earthly expectations and emphasizing the faith of biblical figures like Enoch and Abraham.

Scripture: Philippians 3:14

Topics: "Heavenly Calling", "Church Distinction"

Description

John Gifford Bellett preaches about the heavenly calling bestowed upon the saints, emphasizing the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and the exceeding riches of His grace to be revealed in the ages to come. The participation in this heavenly calling was a mystery revealed only to the church, where God abounds in wisdom and prudence, making known His will and the mind of Christ. The saints, as partakers of this calling, have the Son as their prophet, revealing the deep things of God and the glory of the Father. The distinction between Israel and the church is highlighted, with Israel representing the earthly people and the church representing the heavenly family.

Transcript

The apostle addresses his brethren in Christ as "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3: 1). This calling, in another scripture, is styled "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14). And again, it is spoken of as the calling of the Father of glory (Eph. 1: 17, 18). In those who are the subjects of it God is to show in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace (Eph. 2: 17); and in them also the Lord is to be chiefly admired in the day of the presence of His power, though that is to be a day in which all His works shall praise Him, a day of clouds of witnesses to His glory both in heaven and earth (2 Thess. 1: 10, 11).

This participation of the heavenly calling, thus bestowed on the saints, was not made known in other ages as it is now revealed. For it is only to the church that God has abounded in "all wisdom and prudence;" unto the saints only it is that "he hath made known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself" (Eph. 1: 8, 9). In a wondrous manner it is for them to testify, "We have the mind of Christ." His deep things God has revealed to them by His Spirit (1 Cor. 2: 10). The mystery of God [and of the Father, and of Christ]. it is for them, with full assurance of understanding, to acknowledge (Col. 2: 2). And their title to all this high endowment stands in this -- the Son is their prophet. They have been spoken to by the Son, who is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person;" and "All things," says the Son, "that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:

15). Israel never stood in such privilege as this, God, in sundry measures and in diverse manners, spake to them by His prophets; but their prophets were not the Son, they came not from the bosom of the Father. They were of the earth, and spake of the earth (John 3: 31); for Israel were God's earthly people, having their citizenship and their place here. But the saints, or the church,* are the heavenly family, and their Prophet is therefore He who has come from heaven, and testified what He has seen and heard there. He who was "full of truth" dwelt among us -- the Son from the bosom declared the Father, and gave us an understanding to know Him (1 John 5: 20). In Him and by Him the blessed God is revealed, for we get "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4: 6).

*The distinction between Israel and the church, the one being the earthly people, the other the heavenly, is here rather assumed than proved. [The writer a little confounds "the mystery" with the heavenly calling. -- ED.]

The prophets, who spoke of the earth, have given us many a notice of the earthly glory of the Lord, and sweet and gracious and wondrous is the intelligence. Isaiah speaks of Jehovah's reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously (Isa. 24: 23). Ezekiel, who first saw the Son of man in the glory above the firmament, afterwards saw the same glory returned to the earthly city of the great King (Ezek. 43: 1, 2). And Daniel is very especially the witness of the glory of Christ in the earth, taking a kingdom and dominion here. Indeed the prophets generally could speak of Christ as the King of Israel, and as such the God of the whole earth also, the heathen being given to Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But all this, though to the glory of the Son, was of the earth still. The circumstances in which all this glory is to be revealed must be earthly. But the Gentiles, being "fellow-heirs, and of the same body," was a mystery of which it was not given to the prophets to speak particularly. Co-heirship of God with Jesus the Lord -- spiritual blessings in the heavenlies -- the sanctified and Sanctifier being all of one -- the church as the body of Christ and the fulness of Him that filleth all in all -- these are "the heavenly things" which the Son of man alone has revealed, for He alone came down from heaven, and alone has thus ascended into heaven (John 3: 13).

It is not that there is any new purpose with God; no; but there are due seasons and appointed ministries for the manifestation of His purposes. The church is nothing new as to purpose, but new as to manifestation. Jesus, the Messiah on the earth, was the proper expectation of Israel; and therefore the songs which either ushered in, or accompanied the birth of the Lord, welcoming Him to the earth, were all in celebration of good things to Israel, and announced nothing heavenly. Neither indeed did the resurrection of the Lord, any more than His birth, necessarily take Him beyond earthly glory and Jewish hopes. For the earthly people have their interest in Messiah's resurrection as well as the church. Their prophets foretold it, and the promise, grounded on resurrection, was that to which the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come (Acts 26: 6-9). The hopes of David's throne are identified with the resurrection (Acts 2: 30). It is the resurrection that makes David's mercies sure mercies (Acts 13: 34). And therefore, when the death and resurrection of the Lord were accomplished at Jerusalem, it was to Israel that the testimony was first sent. And even more than this: the ascension did not at once take the Lord out of Jewish connection, for it put Him into possession of the gifts which He was to receive for the rebellious, that is, Israel, and which under the new covenant He is to give to Israel. And we are taught that it is from His ascension-place that He is to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins (Acts 5: 31). But the ascending into heaven after Him, and not waiting here on earth for His return, is beyond all Jewish hopes -- that is, the now, or the heavenly, calling. Mansions in the Father's house, and the special joys and honours of the saints, as the brethren of the Son of God, were before left in a mystery.

But such is the high calling to which the church is called, and it is made known to the saints by the Spirit sent down from the Son, thus ascended into heavenly glory, and when He had been rejected in His resurrection by His earthly people Israel. Till then the time had not come, the ministry had not been prepared, for the revelation of this calling.

But though it were thus, as to express revelation, kept secret, yet from the beginning God had been pleased to signify and shadow it, and the saints are now able, in the light of the full revelation of it, -- to trace out and read such signs and shadows. They see themselves thus as the heavenly family kept in remembrance, even in the midst of the Lord's dealings with the earth and the earthly people.

And I will not refrain from stating here what has lately impressed my own soul with some fresh comfort -- that, amid the increasing anxiety of these times, and the deepening of the world's darkness around us, the light of our God shines pure and steady as ever. This is comfort. The pillar was the same to Israel through whatever part of the desert they passed: that land of the shadow of death might have been gloomier to them in some stages of their wondrous march than in others; but the pillar of God was the same. On it went, the same steady, sure, unvarying guide. It gathered none of the gloom of the desert around it; and I can believe that the more lonely the wilderness became to them, the more steadily did Israel eye it as their abiding companion and friend. And so now with us, beloved. The way to the saint may become lonely, very lonely, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. There is no darkness there, no uncertainty there. This would be our sorrow indeed, if any of the present darkness of which we complain were in Jesus; but it cannot be there. The candle shines on the candlestick; God has not put it under a bushel; it gives light as ever, to all that come in. The darkness is only in the world that surrounds us, and in the evil eye of our own body (Luke 11: 33-36). And therefore, though the night be dark and lonely, there is light to guide us and to cheer us, and the simple obedient saint finds it so (2 Peter 1: 19), The foundations may be destroyed, but the righteous still know what to do, for the light of God remains undimmed (Luke 11: 36). This, brethren, is our comfort -- the word of our God endureth for ever; and may the gracious hand that gave it to us ever control and guide us in using it!

It needs not to be observed, that the different typical persons in scripture set forth the Lord only in certain features of His glory. No one stands out as a full exhibition of Him. Indeed the limited sphere in which they severally moved, under the hand of God, would allow of nothing more than this. In each of them we may get traces of Jesus, but that is all; one after another takes up the wondrous tale, but the half is not told us (1 Kings 10: 7). But still we learn, and learn much from them; and something, as I would now show of the deep things of God, which the Spirit alone searches out, and which God has revealed to us by the Spirit, are made known, as in figure, by them.

In the union of Adam and Eve, and in the law of marriage, in Eden, the oneness of Christ, and the church was from the beginning declared. In the dominion of all things there, Eve being the associate of Adam in his lordship, the joint inheritance of all things on earth by the Lord and His saints was set forth. In the structure and combination of the parts of the tabernacle, much of the same purpose of God was exhibited. The holy places, with the outer courts, were all according to heavenly patterns, presenting the union, and yet distinctness, of the heavens and the earth; as that same union and distinctness had been previously revealed in the vision of the exiled patriarch of the ladder set up on the earth, but whose top reached to heaven? And much like this will be seen in the structure and combination of certain typical persons: for in the laying of them together, the one after the other, as the parts of the tabernacle, it will be found that that order of heavenly and earthly things, which in the end is to be displayed, has from the beginning been foreshown. Of this I have lately been strongly assured. And indeed it is the duty of the saints, as it should

be their delight (ever looking to God for wisdom) to discern the ways of God under His works -- to see His mind and purpose under the mouldings and fashionings of His hand -- to speak of "the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world" (1 Cor. 2: 7).

I would notice this combination of typical persons first in Enoch and Noah.

The earth at the first was given to Adam; "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the earth" (Gen. 1: 28). But in his hand the earth became corrupt, and thus corrupted it passed into the possession of Cain and his family, as will be seen in Genesis 4. They buy, they sell, they plant, they build, they marry and are given in marriage. They stamp their own name upon the earth, and furnish it with all that was good and pleasant in the judgment of the flesh. They were "the world" of that day, and "the things that are in the world" they loved and cultivated. But in the midst of this Cain-earth there was gathered from Seth (appointed to Eve instead of Abel, whom Cain slew) a household of faith, who "call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4: 26). This is their only record. The world knew them not, for they were not of it. They died, generation after generation (Gen. 5). They had no inheritance here; they toiled at the cursed ground, as submitting to God's righteous ordinance, and only looked for a new earth, and a future rest (Gen. 5: 29). They lived by faith, and they died in hope; of whom it may be said, "the world was not worthy." They were the heavenly family -- they acknowledged God in the midst of that world which had willingly estranged itself from His presence to seek out its own inventions.

But in process of time they also corrupted themselves, and the Lord had to testify of their apostasy and loss of heavenly character, and to say of them (as giving them up), "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." "Then did it repent him that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart, for he saw that the wickedness of man was great, and that all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6: 18).

But ere this Enoch had been found among them faithful to his high calling. In the power of the heavenly hope of this Seth-household, "he walked with God," and, according to the end of that hope, "God took him." "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." This is a simple record of this holy and honoured patriarch; but it is large enough to warrant us to say that in His day Enoch was the witness of ascension glory and of the heavenly calling: in him death was abolished, and life and immortality were for a passing moment brought to light; he was not found on earth, for God had taken him. The mansions in the Father's house, as it were, were already prepared, and he was seated in them; and the saints were seen in him as caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

And, in perfect character with all this, Enoch prophesied of the coming of the Lord with His saints to the judgment of the earth. Delivered in spirit out of the evil of the world, he was delivered afterwards in person out of the judgment of it; and he beheld from his elevation -- like Abraham in such a case (Gen. 19: 23) the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace. "Behold the Lord cometh," said Enoch, "with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment" (Jude 14, 15).

But Noah, on the other hand, is not taken away from the judgment, but carried safely through it. The same hand which had raised Enoch out of it conducts Noah through it (Heb. 11: 6, 7). He prepared an ark to the saving of his house; the waters rose around him, wave upon wave; the end of all flesh was shown, to him,

but he lived to rise up the inheritor of a new earth, and with him a covenant that to this day establishes the earth was made, and God set His bow in the cloud as a token of it.

But this was not Enoch glory. Noah was left on the earth still. God remembered Noah assuredly, but it was only to open the door of the ark, and lot him forth upon the earth again. He was found here again; for God had not translated but only preserved him. His faith carried him through the flood into a new world, while Enoch was carried above it up to God.

And such are the divers glories of the church and of Israel; such, the several callings of the heavenly and the earthly families; such, the children of the resurrection and the children of the circumcision; and such, too, are the several seasons ordained for the revelation of these glories. Enoch came before Noah. Enoch was translated to heaven before Noah condemned the old world, and inherited the new. So will the saints be caught up to meet the Lord in the air first, and then will come the judgment of the nations and the manifestation of the Lord in His Noah character, in His glory of earthly rule and inheritance.*

*I would here observe that our blessed Lord speaks of Noah and not of Enoch, in His prophecy in Matthew 24, and this He does because He was the minister of the circumcision, the prophet of Israel. And Noah being thus His theme, we have at once the right interpretation of the prophecy, and we see that the taking, which the Lord speaks of in it, is a taking to judgment, as of the antediluvian apostates, and the leaving means a leaving for blessing, as of Noah and his household; and indeed the Lord tells us so Himself (see ver. 39). But had He in this prophecy been speaking of the church, He would have taken Enoch as His theme, and not Noah; and then the leaving would have been a leaving for judgment, as of the corrupters of the earth who survived Enoch, and the taking would have been a taking to glory as of Enoch himself.

But this Noah-earth quickly became corrupt, as the Adam-earth had before it; and within a little while "the children of men" became again vain in their imaginations, following the pride and naughtiness of their hearts to the very full. Flesh again proved itself to be flesh. Man was the same still, the waters of the flood had not cleansed him, but, big with the old desire to be as God, "the children of men" were now for making themselves a name, and building themselves a city and a tower, whose top should reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11)

But, as before in the person of Seth, the Lord had raised up a heavenly man in the midst of the Cain-world, so now did the God of glory raise up, in the person of Abraham, another heavenly man in the midst of this Noah-world. Government of the earth had been given to Noah, but Abraham is called away from the earth, away from his country, his kindred, and his father's house to walk with God; like Seth or Enoch, a stranger and sojourner here. Abraham, like them before him, got no part in this corrupted earth. God gave him none inheritance in it, "no, not so much as to set his foot on." His tent and his altar accompanied him wherever he went, and marked him as a stranger on the earth with God. He had, in the character of his calling, done with the world. He dwelt here with his children in tabernacles, and died in faith, desiring a heavenly country. He took no part "with the children of men" in their building of cities, and getting themselves a name; but he looked for a city whose builder was God, and waited, according to promise, to have his name made great by Jehovah. But God was eminently with him; his candle, as Job speaks, shined upon his head, and wondrously and blessedly indeed may it be said, the secret of God was upon his tabernacle. This was all his present glory, but it was holy glory. The Lord told him of His ways, and promised him everything. By the hand of Melchizedek heavenly and earthly treasures were pledged to him, and by the word of the Lord heavenly as well as earthly mysteries were made known to him. He was to be the heir of the world, and the father of many nations. He was admitted to the divine presence, and

walked on earth as "the friend of God." The judgment of the world was made to pass before him, but it did not come nigh unto him, only with his eyes did he behold and see the reward of the wicked. The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace, while Abraham looked down from on high upon it, and that too from the very place where he had "stood before the Lord," that is, where he had been in intercession with the Lord (Gen. 19: 27), and which ever is, in principle and character, heaven itself.

He was thus, like Enoch, the elect one -- drawn out from the world before the judgment came. In the crisis of the earth he had nothing to do. But Lot, his kinsman, his inferior and younger kinsman, is left as a remnant in the world after the judgment. He was sent, with sure purpose of love, out of the midst of the overthrow, when God overthrew the city of destruction, in the which he dwelt; but he did not stand on Abraham's elevation. He and Abraham never met afterwards; for he was found, as it were, on the earth still, the remnant that survived the judgment, like Noah before him, while Abraham was above it and out of it altogether, like Enoch.*

*I have been struck by this, that it is never by the communications of angels that Abraham is instructed or helped, but immediately by the Lord Himself, or, which is as the same, by the angel of the Lord, whereas the communication with Lot is only through angels. Thus, in the matter of the destruction of Sodom, we read that it was the Lord who appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18: 11-17), and it was the Lord who spake unto Abraham. but it was only two angels that visited Lot. This, to me, clearly marks the heavens and the earth, as distinguished in the persons of Abraham and Lot.

Such knowledge of the mystery of God's will, purposed in Himself from the beginning, and to be manifested in the dispensation of the fulness of times, by the gathering of all things, whether in heaven or on earth, in one, even in Christ, was thus in types foreshown to, and left among, the patriarchs, whether before or after the flood. And just at the beginning of the Lord's subsequent dealings with that, nation which He had chosen for His own out of the earth, we may find the same purpose again foreshown -- I mean in the combined types of Moses and Joshua.

Moses came from Egypt through the wilderness; as it is written of him, "This was he that was in the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7: 38). He stood on the borders of the land of promise, which was destined soon to be God's world, or that part of the earth which God was about to separate to Himself. But Moses was to go no further. There was to be nothing in this world for Moses but the wilderness land a sight of Canaan. The earth to him was to be no Canaan. His foot was never to tread a land flowing with milk and honey. "Die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people," said the Lord to him (Deut. 32: 50). And Moses did so. He went up from the plain of Moab unto the mount of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, and died there. But did he die the death of all men? Died Moses as a fool dieth? No, it was the Lord Himself who put him asleep; the dead may bury the dead, but the Lord buried Moses. "He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34: 6). Though He showed His care in another way, yet it was equal care for the body of Moses as had been shown, for that of Enoch, and because they were to be equally children of the resurrection. Some sleep, but they which are alive and remain shall not prevent them which are asleep, but all shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4: 15-17). The earth does not, to this day, own the body of Moses. Like others, it is true, it has returned dust to dust, but the Lord Himself buried it with sure and certain purpose of giving it a resurrection unto glory. It was not the power of death that had oppressed Moses. Though a hundred and twenty years old, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. The Lord could have said of him (as of all the children of the resurrection), "If I will that he tarry till I come;" for death is abolished to them all. But He was otherwise minded, and graciously so; for in Moses He has

given to all those who may be called to "sleep in Jesus" a sure pledge that their bodies are not forgotten in the grave, but though sown in corruption, they shall be raised in glory; though once in the image of the earthly, they shall be found in the image of the Heavenly.

But there is in Moses much more of a church or heavenly aspect, if I may so express myself, than even all this -- as indeed it is only while they were travelling in the wilderness that Israel bears analogy to the church of God on the earth. The stricter analogy ends when Israel gets into Canaan, and is there organised and settled as God's nation; and therefore all things that happened to them as examples, and which are written for the church's admonition, happened to them when in the wilderness, and are found written, all of them, in the book of Numbers, which the Jews called, and properly so, "the book of the wilderness" (see 1 Cor. 10: 1-10). And Moses was their leader, and the companion of their joys and sorrows, only while they continued in the wilderness; and thus in the very character of his position while on the earth, his course, as we thus see, ending in the wilderness, and he himself never taking his place among the people of Israel, when organised and manifested as God's nation, we clearly discern in Moses much more of the heavenly than of the earthly calling -- more of the church character than of Israel.

Besides, Moses was constantly with the Lord Jesus in the heavens, dwelling unveiled, like the church, in the presence of Christ beyond the region of the lightning and thunder, from whence the law was delivered (Ex. 34: 34; 2 Cor. 3: 18), and in the presence of which Israel stood (Ex. 24: 17). He was in the peaceful sunshine on the top of the hill of God; there he walked amid the fulness of Christ, receiving token after token of His grace and salvation. He saw face to face, he beheld the similitude of the Lord, and was spoken with mouth to mouth, and he shone with the heavenly glory of Jesus in the heights. And according to all this, he is afterwards seen in the holy mount, in company with Elijah, occupying the place which is characteristically the church's place (Matt. 17: 3).

And I would add this, that Moses got a wife and children when he was, through their unbelief and rejection of him, separated from his brethren, the children of Israel, and when, consequently, as he says himself, he was an "alien in a strange land" (Ex. 2: 22; Ex. 18: 3). And so has the Lord been brought in among the Gentiles through the unbelief and rejection of Israel, and is gathering a church, a wife and children, out from among them. And thus, in all this, Moses is strikingly in character with the Lord in the present dispensation and calling of the church, bearing upon him much more of the heavenly than of the earthly calling, exhibiting the Lord in connection with the church rather than with Israel. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness."*

*I refrain for the present from stating what I apprehend to be the typical import of the names of Moses' children, though I believe them to be very significant,

But Joshua, who comes after Moses, presents another thing altogether. He stood in the land, the good land, which the Lord gave for an inheritance to Israel. The heathen were given to him, and the kings and rulers of the earth he broke in pieces like a potter's vessel. He divided the land by lot among the tribes, the children of the circumcision, and their reproach he rolled away. Joshua raised the altar of the Lord in the land, taking possession of it in His name, and the earth smiled around them, the garden of the Lord, again. Joshua was thus the man of victory, and the heir of the inheritance here; Moses had been but the man of Egypt and the wilderness, who died on the other side of Jordan. But Moses was laid up by the hand of the Lord for resurrection, while Joshua still stood upon the earth. Like Enoch and Noah of old among the patriarchs, Moses and Joshua now in Israel tell out the same wonderful tale, the purpose of God concerning the heaven and the earth, and in the same order of time also. For as Enoch was translated to

heaven before Noah inherited the earth, so Moses was buried by the Lord in Mount Pisgah before Joshua crossed the Jordan, and took possession of the land of promise. But in their turn, under the guiding hand of God, they each take up the same mystery, and foreshow the dispensation of the fulness of times, and of the gathering of all things in Christ, whether things in earth, or things in heaven. The glories are two, but the same Lord is the centre and sustainer of both. In a glass darkly we see the heavenly family, whether alive or asleep at the coming of the Lord, in Enoch and Moses, and we see the earth restored and inherited again in Noah and Joshua.*

*And as to Moses and Joshua, I would further observe this -- that they performed very different services for Israel, and they set forth the Lord in very different characters. Moses was the mediator between God and the people while travelling through the wilderness; Joshua was the saviour of the people out of the wilderness, and their leader into the land of rest and promise. Moses, therefore, presents the Lord in His Priesthood, or Mediatorship, as in this dispensation, or, as with the church. Joshua presents Him to us in His character as Saviour of Israel in the latter day, when He shall lead His ransomed tribes into their promised rest. Jesus is Saviour and Jesus and Joshua are one -- the former being the Greek, the latter the Hebrew, form of the very same name.

Again, in the combined histories of Elijah and Elisha we shall find the same testimony among the prophets, another foreshowing of the same mystery; every age being thus made to witness this purpose of God. Elijah, like Enoch before him, stands in an evil day. He is called forth in a day of deep apostasy in Israel, and, in the spirit of a righteous reprovener, he suddenly breaks in upon Ahab and all his iniquity with a voice of judgment. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be, dew nor rain these years but according to my word" (1 Kings 17: 1). The Baptist's voice in another day, "Repent ye, O generation of vipers," was, as it were, but the echo of this voice of God's prophet before Ahab. The same spirit and power were in both. And their course on the earth was of one character also. The prophet suffers for his testimony; this was his only portion here. There was, it is true, a rejoicing in his light for a season, as afterwards with the Jews in the light of the Baptist. The people fell on their faces, acknowledging the Lord God of Elijah, saying, "Jehovah he is the God, Jehovah he is the God;" and the prophets of Baal were taken down and slain at the brook Kishon (1 Kings 18: 39, 40). But the burning and shining light of God's prophet was quickly disowned, as afterwards was John, his companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Another Herod and Herodias are confederate against Elijah, and he is exiled, afflicted, and destitute; the world hates him, the hand of man is against him. The Lord acknowledges His suffering witness, and comforts Him, -- but it is the comforting of one who is cast down, cast down by the enmity of man. The still small voice of love meets his ear, but it is in that wilderness out to which the hand of a prosecutor had driven him. His enemies are strong and many, and from the beginning to the end he continues to be the suffering and exiled one, the righteous witness of God cast out by an evil generation. This was his course on earth; till at last, when the suffering was all accomplished, and he had fought his fight, and finished his course, and kept the faith, he is made to enter into glory. Having believed, he lives; having suffered, he reigns. Earth disowns, but heaven receives him. Another cloud takes him out of our sight (Acts 1: 9). The chariot and horses of Israel seat him as a child of the resurrection among the angels (Luke 20: 36), and the world, which had troubled him for his righteousness' sake, now only knows that his reward is great in heaven (Matt. 5: 12).

I need not say how all this is characteristic of the Lord and the church. The rejected One walking by faith on earth, there knowing the enmity of man, and the consolations of God, is at length glorified among the angels in heaven. All this tells us of that heavenly family who walk here in faith unvindicated and

disowned; but who, believing, are to live, and who, suffering, are to reign. And as in the case of Moses, Elijah is seen in the holy mount, the companion of the glory, as he had been of the sufferings of Christ, occupying that which is to be the place of the church, or the heavenly glory.

But in Elisha we have something altogether different. No suffering for him after his master was taken from him. He stands before kings, and is not ashamed. It is not with him as it had been with his master; the wrath of the king prevailing to exile and to trouble him, but chief captains wait at his gates, and kings send presents to him; he discloses the secrets of one of them, disappoints the purposes of another, gives pledges of victory to a third, and grants supplies to combined armies of them. Chariots of salvation fill the mountain as attendants on the prophet. Every path on which he treads wears after him some trace of the greatness of him who had been travelling there; famine, disease, and death seem to own him; mercies and judgments are dispensed through his hand. He stands above all difficulty, going onward still in the Lord from strength to strength. Nature changes its course at his bidding; and at length even his dead body puts forth strange and surprising virtue (2 Kings 13: 21). It sends forth the prisoners out of the pit, that they might not die, but live, and walk on earth again, as before the Lord, in the land of the living.

All this was a travelling in greatness of strength; but it was a travelling in greatness only upon the earth. The things that Elisha did were great things (as it is said of them, 2 Kings 8: 4), but still they were only things of the earth. It was the earth that witnessed the power of God in the prophet; his was not, with Elijah, glory among the angels in heaven, but glory in the earth, power amid the resources and over the circumstances of the world. And thus again, in these two prophets, the same wondrous tale is told out, the same purpose of God concerning the heavens and the earth in the world to come. And the very same seasons may be observed here as we have observed above. Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind into heaven before Elisha received the double portion of his spirit, and went through the earth in the greatness of the strength of it. All this being to foreshow the heavens receiving the church; and then, but not till then, Israel and the earth receiving blessing again in the restitution of all things.*

*The same order of time seems matter of express revelation; for Paul says, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11: 25, 26).

Such are, to me, very distinct and significant foreshowings of the heavenly calling, and of the purpose of God, which in the dispensation of the fulness of times is to be manifested. But it must not be understood that in this comparative view of Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, with Noah, Lot, Joshua, and Elisha -- I mean to present the first rank as individually and personally belonging to the heavenly family, and the second rank of them to the earthly. Surely not. I speak of them only in their typical bearing.

They stand, when thus combined, as foreshowing the two departments of the coming kingdom of our Lord -- the church called up to heaven and the throne -- Israel settled in honour and in blessing, with the attending nations on the earth or the footstool. But as Enoch will be found among the children of the resurrection, so will Noah; and Joshua will appear with Moses, and Elisha with Elijah, in the true mount of transfiguration.

And this is just what we may observe upon that typical mount itself. There Peter, James, and John, in type, presented the place which the earthly family is to hold in the kingdom; for still, in bodies of flesh and blood, they stood merely before the heavenly glory, and not in it. But we know that in the antitype, or the kingdom, they will hold the other place, and be where they then saw Moses and Elijah, in the glory on the heavenly mount with the Lord Himself; this St. Peter clearly declares (2 Peter 1: 16). The inheritance of all

the saints is in heaven (1 Peter 1: 4). The patriarchs looked for a "heavenly" country (Heb. 11: 19). The Lord is to come, and all His saints with Him, as Zechariah prophesies (Zech. 14: 5). Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets are to be seen hereafter in the kingdom of God (Luke 13: 28). I do judge that scripture instructs us that all the elect, as well those who came before the Son was revealed, as well as those who are now under the ministry of the Spirit of the Son glorified, will be found together in the heavenly glory of the kingdom -- for all are of one body. Until the Son was sent forth, they were as children under tutors and governors, under the rudiments of the world, but still they were of the Father, as we are. No better than servants, but still lords of all, as we are.

In their measure, too, they continued with the Lord in His temptations, standing each in his day faithful, like Jesus among the faithless; and therefore their place must be that of the children, and their reward that of the faithful witnesses. They lived by faith, and they died in faith, and are laid up surely as children of the resurrection: no longer of the earth, earthy, but to bear the image of the Heavenly, in the day when death is to be swallowed up of victory.

And now, in closing, let me, while having thus sought to know the deeper parts of God's ways and purposes concerning us, call to your remembrance, brethren, the ever fresh and blessed truth of the love of God our Saviour. The command to you is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength." and again, the command is, "Rejoice in the Lord always." Now, never would He have thus commanded us, if He had not forgiven us, and would have us to know this forgiveness. For it were but a thankless task to try to love Him thus, and to rejoice in Him thus, while we know not that He is ours in the full joy of forgiveness. It were a commandment beyond obedience altogether, if we were not to know Him in the reconciliation. He who commands us to love and rejoice in Him, commands us to know Him to be at peace with us. He never would have said to us

"Give me thy heart," if He had not addressed us with "My son" (Prov. 23: 25). The call tells us of the relationship; the demand made upon us implies the grace which has been brought to us; and in this way we may use the sweet words of our Lord, "I know that his commandment is life everlasting." It is His command that we believe in His forgiving love. God is disobeyed if we receive not the blessing with joy. Our obedience to God, therefore, thus depends on our receiving the reconciliation.

But not only this, our godly use and apprehension of the things around us depends, in like manner, on knowing the reconciliation through the death and rising again of Jesus. It is this which the new creature in Christ apprehends in them all, as the apostle speaks, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us unto himself by Jesus Christ." And not only so, all that which as saints is our service to others depends on this likewise. For instance, our ministry flows from it: for it is to us, as the apostle further speaks, who are reconciled that the ministry of reconciliation is given (2 Cor. 5: 18). "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus." Our intercessions flow from it, for it is only in the consciousness of our own acceptance that we can intercede for others. Abraham drew near to the Lord when he prayed for Sodom. The high priest under the law went into the holiest of all. The altar of incense stood close to the second veil. And therefore, when the church is exhorted to make prayers, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men, she is, doubtless, by that very exhortation commanded to know her own full acceptance, and thus to pray without doubting (1 Tim. 2). So blessedly thus, dear brethren, does everything help to assure our hearts before God our Saviour, and keep us in the sense of His forgiving and accepting love. The very commands He has

delivered, the spirit in which He calls us to walk, the services He requires, all are made to witness to us the reconciliation. The full abiding sense of the reconciliation we should bear about with us everywhere; as Adam, though sent out to a world which his own sin had defiled, and which was thus a constant witness against him, bore on his shoulder the coat of skin, the pledge and witness of grace and forgiveness towards him from the hand of God Himself.

And I would add one other thing, which has touched my own soul with comfort while writing these pages -- that if we even now rejoice (as surely we do daily), and that in a world of such offence and trespass as "this present evil world" is -- if the sunshine and fruitful seasons, and a thousand other springs of constant, ever flowing joy be such as they are to us here, what must be the joy when the offence is for ever removed, and all is subjection and service! when God again rejoices in His works! when in the dispensation of the fulness of times He has gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him! May the brightness of that day be much before us, and our hearts know more and more what it is to long for His appearing.

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