

## The Father

John 14 - 17.

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"I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it." These words were spoken to the Father by Christ respecting the saints. They tell us that the great business of the Lord was to acquaint saints with the Father, that such had already been His business, and that such He purposed should be his business still.

This is full of blessing. To think that our souls are under such instruction as this! The Son nourishing and enlarging in us the sense and understanding of the Father's love, and using His diligence to give our hearts that joy and to give it to us more abundantly! We may be slow and we are slow to learn it. We naturally suspect all happy thoughts of God. Christ has to use diligence and to put forth energy in teaching us such a lesson. "I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it." But so it is. This is the lesson of which He is the teacher, and our inaptness to learn it magnifies His grace, for he is still at it, still teaching the same lesson.

The earlier chapters (14 - 16) show us Christ declaring the Father. They begin with His telling us that the Father has opened His own house to us — nay, that He had built it with direct respect to us, having made it a many-mansioned house for our reception. (John 14: 2.)

He then, with some resentment of their unbelief, tells them that the Father had been already revealing Himself to them. "Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Because the things He had said and done, He had said and done as Son of the Father, as the One who was in the Father and in whom also the Father was. (Ver. 5-14.)\*

\*The Lord's rebuke of Philip has not such direct application to Philip's unbelief touching the person of the Son, as to his unbelief respecting the revelation of the Father which had been made by the Son; the other is involved.

For this was natural unbelief, the indisposedness to learn the lesson of the Father of which I have spoken. And happy it is to find it here rebuked by the Lord. Indeed it is only faith which can sit as Christ's pupil — that principle which only listens. The moral sense of man reasons itself out of that school.

Jesus, however, goes on with the lesson in spite of this dullness. He tells them, after this interruption, how He purposed, when away, to glorify the Father in their works and in their experience. (Ver. 12-14.) And then He tells them that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost, who was about to come to them, would come as the Spirit of the Father, letting them know that they were not orphans, but had the life of the Son in them. (Ver. 16-20.) And again He tells them that the keeping of His word would secure to their souls the presence and fellowship of the Father, as well as His, because the word was not His, but the Father's who had sent Him. (Ver. 21-24.) This word or commandment which was to be kept in order to this fellowship being secured to the soul was about love, because it was the word brought by the Son from the Father, and not a word brought from a king, or from a judge, or from a legislator. (See John 13: 34; John 15: 12, 17.)

In all these truly blessed ways He declares the Father to us and uses Himself only as the witness

or servant of such a revelation. His own personal glory is implied in such a service; but that is not His object — the declaration of the Father is. And so also, as He proceeds through this wondrous discourse, He declares the Father to be the husbandman of the vine, thereby letting us know, that the fruit sought for is fruit worthy of a Father's hand, fruit which children, not servants or subjects, must yield. (John 15: 1-14.) And again, the friendship He introduces them to with Himself has respect to the Father, because it was the Father's secrets He was communicating to them in the confidence of friendship. (Ver. 15.) And then, at the close of the same chapter, He presents the world simply in the character of having hated the Father, testified in and by the Son. ( Ver. 23, 24.)

How does all this make good the word, "I have declared unto them thy name!" But further. He anticipates the day of the Holy Ghost, but He does this in constant recollection and mention of the Father. The Spirit was the Spirit of the Father, given by Him, sent by Him (John 14: 16, 26; John 15: 26); and when He came, their divine Teacher now tells them that they should ask the Father and receive from Him, that this their joy as children who know a Father's love and blessing should be full. (John 16: 23, 24.)\* And He further tells them that in that day they should plainly know their adoption, or their place with the Father. (Ver. 25.)

\*It is not the thing they receive which makes their joy full, but the proof they get through it that they have their Father's heart and ear. The Father, not the gift, does this for them, filling up their joy. (See John 16: 24.)

And somewhat beyond all this, and as crowning all He had said, He tells them that His prayers for them in heaven were not to be understood as though they and the Father were somewhat distant from each other, but that rather they must assure themselves that the Father's love rested immediately on them, as in the full power of the relation in which He stood to them. (John 16: 26, 27.)

Thus, it was the name of the Father He was declaring to them all through these wonderful chapters, bringing the Father into the thoughts and enjoyments of their hearts. And if love and heaven be prized by us, what welcome communications will these be!

So, on the closing chapter (John 17) we may say, No tidings from us return to God so acceptably as this, that we have, by faith, received these tidings of the Father. The Son brought a message of love to us from the bosom of the Father, and if He now report to the Father that we have received the message, this will be the most prized answer with the Father. And such receiving of this word about the Father will also be our truest sanctification or separation from the world, for the world is that which refuses to know the Father.

I might more shortly express it thus. In John 14 - 16 the Lord purposes to put our souls into communion with the Father. He fills the soul with thoughts of the Father; recollections, present exercises of spirit, and prospects, are all by Him connected with the Father. He tells us, it is the Father's house that is to receive us by and by, it was the Father who had been working and speaking in Him, so that what HE, had said and done had been the sayings and doings of the Father; that greater works than He had done they soon should do, for He was going to the Father; that the Comforter would be sent to them from the Father; that their fruitfulness should arise from the Father being the husbandman; that the world would hate them, because it knew not the Father nor Him that the Father Himself loved them, and that they should soon enter into the sense of their relationship to Him.

If the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, realize these things to us, we may set our seals to that word, "it is expedient for you that I go away."\* May this blessed sense of relationship fill and satisfy our souls more abundantly!

\*So, I may say, the Lords purpose in John 13 is to put our souls in communion with Himself in heaven.

He shows us Himself in heaven; as the very home of love and of glory, because He was to be restored to the Father there, and to have all things put into His hand by God there. And after this manner He anticipates heaven as the home of love and of glory to Him.

But then He lets us know that He would ever continue in His love towards us there, and in His service of our necessities — that, though there, He could never forsake either us or our need. Thus He seeks to put us into communion with Himself as He is now in heaven, just as afterwards (in John 14 - 16) He seeks to put us, as I have been observing, into communion with the Father.