Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham
2nd. October, 1950

33rd. Jeremiah 50/E

At the beginning of this Service I read the 33rd. chapter of Jeremiah, a chapter full of encouragement to the Lord's waiting people. In this chapter is a very confirming intimation not only of the restoration of Israel after the captivity, but also to the coming of the Messiah and a settled government.

In this chapter we have in the first place a prayer answering God exhorting His people to call upon Him, "Call unto me", He said "and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not", as though He would say in working this deliverance on your behalf, I will do for you more than you could have expected, and more even than you could have asked at my hand. What great encouragements there are to exercised people to pray, although at times their faith is tried in the way the Lord deals with them in their petitions. Sometimes immediate answers are given, the Lord responds quickly so that deliverance is wrought and the hand of God made to appear in a striking and remarkable way. At other times there may be long delay, doubtless to try faith and patience and to confirm His own work and to bring into exercise His own grace. But oh what a wonderful mercy it is that a covenant God should ever deign in any way whatsoever to hear and answer prayer, and to deal with that prayer in a way that shall be for His own honour and glory; I believe some here have had a Gospel deliverance, have been delivered from their bondage, have enjoyed a sweet sense of relationship with the Lord Jesus, communion with Him, and have felt Him to be unspeakably precious. Some of you here it may be, I do not know, feel very discouraged by reason of the delay or with-holding, as you feel, of this blessing, this liberty in your own case. But if the enemy should try to tempt you to discontinue praying, turn more earnestly and with greater importunity to the Lord. Fill your mouth with arguments and

give Him no rest until He shall bring into your soul that blessing that shall enable you to say "The Lord is my God".

Not only is the Lord before us in the chapter as a prayer answering God, but as a sin pardoning God, "I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me." Is it not good on the part of God who though He was dealing in the way of chastening and judgment, and though these people were long in their captivity, yet He says He will cause the captivity of Judah and Israel to return as at the first and says "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth". What an extraordinary word, and how confirming to those who may be seeking heart and soul unto the Lord for His appearing and for this particular blessing. Sin has defiled us, brought us under a curse, separated us from God, but yet the voice of mercy is heard through all the din and noise of temptation and bondage and darkness telling a repenting sinner of acceptance and mercy and forgiveness at the Lord's hand.

The Lord is also before us here as a promise performing God. "Behold",the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah". He was from a human point of view a long time performing it but He did perform it and every promise the Lord makes is as though He has already performed it; and this is designed to encourage the waiting people of God, in its spiritual aspect, and that He will never fall back upon His word. He will perform His promise to His spiritual seed and will surely bestow upon them those needful gospel blessings. He will restore them, bring them into a joyful place, fill them with His goodness, and give them to praise Him. Moreover inasmuch as this may have to do with any community, it is attractive, and we can perhaps say

even in our own case here that it has been in a measure fulfilled among us. Oh what mercies we have had; how good the Lord has been to us. I would feel thankful for His great mercy, and have sometimes been amazed that my own sins have not caused Him to hide His face from this sanctuary. But He does still give us as a people, generally speaking, to enjoy His blessed Gospel, and this is my great comfort and I trust it may be more and more so, so that even among us here there may still be and be even in a greater measure, "the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say Praise the Lord of hosts for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever". Oh sons and daughters of Zion, His goodness outweighs all our sins, and though indeed there is much, at least in myself to occasion shame and confusion of face, yet oh how sweet is His voice, how wonderful is His love, how sure is His promise, how great is His Gospel, and what a prospect He has put before His people; not only in regard to their relationship with Himself but in their ultimate happiness, when they are brought into the land of uprightness, where no more sin will defile.

Then again we have here a promise performing God, He says, "If", and that is a remarkable if, "If my covenant be not of day and night", if I have not appointed these; if I have not declared that they shall continue, if they are not designed by my power, day and night, heaven and earth and all the dynamic powers of the air and the firmament, if they do not continue, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant. Here therefore we have a covenant keeping God; while heaven and earth shall pass away He has said my word shall never pass away and not one jot or tittle fail.

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