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LSD 389

Prayer meeting address by Mr.J.Delves at "Ebenezer", Clapham
on Monday evening, 22nd. October, 1951

Reading: Psalm 122

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The language of this Psalm is very expressive and very beautiful in that delight in communion with God in the exercises of divine worship which, when rightly viewed, must ever be the end in view. Consequently, any act of public worship in the name of God has in it a sacredness, a solemnity and even a majesty. In this Psalm two points might briefly be noticed. In the first place there is delight in it which is expressed in other Psalms as in Psalm 27 where the Psalmist says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple", so that although God does not confine Himself to the public means yet they, being of His appointment, it is where He does at times own His appointments and does make the season sacred unto His children. The reason why David desired to dwell in the house of the Lord was to behold the beauty of the Lord. This is the beauty of the blessed Gospel as it is revealed to faith in the person of Emmanuel, the beauty of contact with God, not just a formal engagement but that communion which at times is peculiarly felt and enjoyed in the soul and is only known where the life and exercise of faith is. He expressed thus his delight in the worship of God. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." If there is a delight in the heart of a spiritual nature in an earnest of divine worship we may anticipate some enjoyment of the Lord's blessing in it. There is a delight which is sweet to feel and, when felt, service is never dry or burdensome, is not a cold duty but a sacred joy, a delight to the soul, because if we may at times entertain a little hope that one day we shall enjoy that spiritual worship in its highest degree of beauty and heavenly joy, should it not be a sweet anticipation to hear the Saviour's voice here, to feel a nearness, to get just a touch of worship which is, as it were, the earnest of heaven, to feel the soul's affections drawn to the blessed Trinity and especially to the exalted Lamb of God? We cannot always be thus engaged but there is something real about this at times when the soul is lively and when the things of God have the first consideration.

"I was glad when they said unto me", not, 'O well I wish we had not got worship this day or this evening, I have other things more important that concern me more, that have a closer interest', no, "I was glad", if your soul is in the enjoyment of the Lord's favour it will be a pleasure, rightly viewed, to be able to leave the thick clay for a few moments and hold fellowship with God.

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem", as though the Psalmist would say, 'I want to go right into the exercise and enjoyment of it in its highest order, not to be just an on-looker, a disinterested person, an outer court worshipper'. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem". This Psalm was very sweet to my spirit this afternoon coming home and softened my heart a little; I felt as though I could go through much and could pray that the Lord's favour and goodness might be continued to us, and I looked forward to meeting you again.

Then there is the prayer here, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee". There is something very sweet about that peace in its right nature and it seems at times to bring forth prayer out of the heart. The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for this little sanctuary where we are favoured to assemble together. "They shall prosper that love thee". What is this prosperity? Well, it may be looked upon in a numerical way but the real prosperity is the soul's joy in communion with God, liveliness, nearness, brokenness, repentance, confession, meekness. There is a prosperity of a spiritual nature that can be distinct from numbers. Although it is exceedingly confirming to see the cause of God maintained and built up with godly converts, O to be prospered in our souls, to take root downward and bear fruit upward.

"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces". It is a healthy sign when we can as friends and members go through this Psalm and use the language without reserve concerning us here, and can say, and I believe we can say it, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces". This is not a peace at any price, at the expense of faithfulness in a gracious and earnest contention for the truth, but a peace that issues from a spiritual unity and oneness in the things that accompany salvation and in prayer one for another and seeking each others' good, "For my brethren and companions' sake". It is so expressive as though he would say, not only for myself. I was glad when they said, let us go into the house of the Lord, not only for myself but "for my brethren and companions' sakes; I will now say, Peace be within thee".

The Lord in His great mercy keep us in this blessed frame and that will be one of the best ways of seeking the good of Jerusalem, "Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good." Amen

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