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## **REDEMPTION AND THE REDEEMER**

**1 Peter 1: 13-23; 2: 9, 10; Revelation 1: 5-7; 5: 8-14; Isaiah 35: 7-10**

R.T. I felt that the Lord may use this occasion to develop us in our affections for the Lord Jesus and strengthen us in appreciation of Him and His work. It is very easy to settle down in a formal line of things and rest, perhaps, on what is historical, what has been done for us, and what we have believed in, but there is a need for us to be maintained ever in living, deepening affections for Christ. That alone is what is seeing the testimony through in life and vitality. Generally speaking things are declining, becoming dead – that is what has happened to Israel, fallen into a state of sleep, death even, through not recognising and appreciating their great Redeemer. I thought thus to speak of the matter of redemption and the Redeemer, that it may deepen our affections and strengthen us as to the great realm of love that has been opened up for us to live in and enjoy.

I was thinking of this word in Peter, “knowing that ye have been redeemed”. What an effect that is going to have on Israel!

That is why I read Isaiah, not to dwell on the detail of that passage, but if you go through Isaiah, the chapters in particular from the forties onwards, you see how much redemption and the Redeemer come on to their view. It is going to bring them into entirely new circumstances of life as they come to appreciate their Redeemer, the One who bought them, the One who drew them to Himself.

Redemption, if it is anything, is a love matter. I thought that Peter would be developing that with these persons who were in testing circumstances, and as tests arise we are liable to fall back on something that is past and thus come into an area of doubt or fear.

Peter brings in this word, “knowing that ye have been redeemed”. I thought of these verses in the Revelation, where the elders have experience of the Redeemer, and when John is perturbed about no one being able to handle things, the elders are persons who have known their Redeemer as One in whom they can rest. This knowledge in their souls brings out a great response of praise into

which the angels are brought also. I thought that as we proceed, the Lord may use the time, and the Spirit may have liberty to fasten our affections on our great Redeemer, and the great end results. It speaks in Ephesians of redemption and the forgiveness of sins (see Eph 1: 7). Forgiveness of sins is one matter, but redemption has a great deal more in it. We may limit it to that but redemption has in mind movement. Scriptures abound with references to that, especially in the bringing them out of Egypt. In Exodus 15 it speaks of the nation that God had brought out, "Thou by thy mercy hast led forth the people that thou has redeemed; Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness" (v 13). Redemption has in mind that we are coming into different circumstances. If only we have a sense of our sins forgiven and remain in our circumstances, we are not appreciating the Redeemer or redemption, indeed it is a slight on the Lord Jesus and His work, if we only rest on the forgiveness of our sins without a movement forward.

Peter is concerned that these persons may move, "knowing that ye have been redeemed". They have been redeemed not only from their sins, but from circumstances that would hold them in bondage, tradition and what has been handed down from our fathers. We may be in a greater danger of that than we think, the formal line of things that is apt to creep in, even among brethren, whereas a line of appreciating redemption and the Redeemer, brings us out of these kinds of circumstances into circumstances of life, to set forth the excellencies of Him that has called us. I trust the brethren have liberty and the Spirit may have liberty to fasten our eyes on this great highway that is spoken of in Isaiah, a great highway that has been opened up where the redeemed can walk, and sing with joy.

E.C.B. The verse to which you refer in Ephesians 1 says "the Beloved: in whom we have redemption (vv 6,7).

R.T. I wondered about reading that. I thought it was good to bring it in, the Person in whom we have Redemption, the Beloved. That chapter is speaking of what God has found in Christ to bring us into this realm of divine purpose and blessing.

E.C.B. I think what you are suggesting is very much needed, probably nothing is more needed at the moment. It says, “I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine”, Isa 43: 1. That is a new possession.

R.T. I think we need to have some sense of that. Redemption has been to bind us up in living association with Christ, a risen Man. The Redeemer is a risen, glorified Man. He has met Satan and all that has come in through the fall and the Redeemer is One who is victorious. Now, in His love, He is drawing us with these cords of love to bind us to Himself outside the circumstances in which we were. If you look at Israel in these chapters in Isaiah, what liberty they have, what joy they have, as they come into this great highway where there are no foes, where evil is suppressed! They are able in the joy of being associated with the Redeemer to come into divine blessing in all its fulness.

E.C.B. The history of Israel in relation to redemption would teach us a very great deal about what God has in mind for us. It begins in Exodus, but it goes right through to their reviving, “what their reception but life from among the dead” (Rom 11: 15) – but then they are to be for God. It says in a later chapter in Isaiah, “And they shall call them, ... The redeemed of Jehovah”, Isa 62: 12.

R.T. It is remarkable how much it comes into that scripture and David when he is speaking before God, speaks of Israel, “the one nation in the earth that God went to redeem to be a people to himself”, 2 Sam 7 :23. Think of that coming into our souls, the one nation that God went to redeem! What lengths He has gone to, to bring us out of these circumstances of bondage! How it filled David’s soul – the one nation on all the earth. What an expression of His love that He went to such lengths! They were slaves and bondmen in Egypt and He went that far through the slain lamb, the lamb that is referred to in Peter, he went that far to bring us out of those circumstances into the enjoyment and liberty of His presence.

D.A.B. I was thinking of the Psalm – David does not say he *came* to redeem, but he *went*, Moses’ song says that He brought

them to Himself. He is not working simply to change the nature of our present circumstances but to bring us into His own.

R.T. He brought all the resources of His love into redemption. The power of Egypt, the power of Pharaoh, and for us the power of Satan, the power of sin, the weakness of the flesh, God brought in all the resources of His love to bring us out of these conditions entirely, not only to bring us out that our sins are forgiven and we will go to heaven when we die, but He brought the resources of His love into those conditions to bring us out to be for Himself, to be His own possession out of all the earth. That is what Peter is trying to encourage these saints about. Like us they were being tested. Things had become very difficult for them; that is the days in which we are; they are becoming increasingly difficult for the saints. Peter is saying that ye have been redeemed, brought out of these things, and God has exercised His authority in the Redeemer so that He has a right to call us out and He would attach our affections to Christ that we may be kept out of vain conversation and these things, to be a people for a possession.

E.F.W. The scripture would affect us all, "For the redemption of their soul is costly" (Ps 49: 8), when we think of what it has cost to redeem *each* of us. Would that help us, and to realise that our Redeemer liveth?

R.T. Job was exulting when he was brought to realise that in all his troubles, he could rest in that. I think it is something that the appreciation of redemption would do, as we have in these elders. It gives us confidence in the God who has forgiven us our sins, that He is able to bring us out of these circumstances, however trying they may be. As you say, the cost is referred to here – "precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ, foreknown". What depths have entered into that work of redemption!

D.J.H. I was thinking of "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world". God's love was there and looking forward before ever the circumstances arose, that this provision should be made that we might be delivered out of them.

R.T. And there is One who has been able to effectuate it all and that is our Redeemer. That is what I would seek, that our affections may be fixed on such a One, the Redeemer. He is above everything. He came in and brought divine resources into these circumstances that sin had brought in, but the Redeemer is victorious. He has met all the claims that were there. Redemption is the thought of being bought. We have it with Ruth, she was bought out of these circumstances to be the wife of Boaz. That is the great end in redemption. I think we need help to get a longer view of it, to see the great end that has been accomplished in redemption.

E.C.B. The very idea of redemption implies that the Redeemer wanted you.

R.T. That is a fine thing to get a sense of in our souls, especially in difficulties and sorrows, and in weakness, that there was a movement of love. Everything is not redeemed. It is only precious things that are redeemed. It gives us a sense of how precious we are in the divine mind that such a price has been paid and such a work has been undertaken to bring us into liberty from these ordinances and things that may again enslave us.

E.C.B. What we come into through redemption goes far beyond what God had in view for Adam when He first created him.

R.T. It has eternal matters in view. It has in mind that we are brought out of one set of circumstances never to go back, but to go on this highway that is referred to in Isaiah. I thought it was an interesting reference that there is a highway. In redemption a highway has been opened up that nothing can intrude upon. Persons who have been brought into this highway are there, walking and singing in all the liberty of knowing their God and in being in living relations with Him.

J.W. Is it interesting then that in that connection it says “who” – which would be Christ no doubt – “has been manifested at the end of times for your sakes”. Does that indicate how much there is for us to go in for?

R.T. It brings up the value of the present time. The time we are in is the time of the redeemed. As we think of Israel, what a day it will be when they come to realise that it is a time of their being redeemed. For centuries they have been scattered, under bondage to the nations, but the year of the redeemed has come. We have been brought into that now, “manifested ... for your sakes”. Then it says, “who by him do believe on God”. He is bringing us into different circumstances. It is not just that we are brought into the meeting and break bread, but we are brought to live in entirely different circumstances. I think appreciation of and confidence in the Redeemer will preserve us from falling back on lesser circumstances.

R.J.C. Redemption suggests that something was lost. We were lost and nothing from our side has effected anything; it is all from God’s side. He has brought us back for His own pleasure.

R.T. Not only were we lost, but everything was lost. That is a tremendous matter. At the incoming of sin everything was lost, but in the Redeemer everything has been brought back. A whole new order of things has been established, but then it is for persons to come into that. That is the highway; there is another way in which we can live, and that involves that we are delivered from this vain conversation. We do not fall back on ritual or even phrases or customs, but we are brought back into a living order of things that is seen in those living creatures and the elders, to be swelled in our praise to God who has effectuated such redemption.

P.M. He has raised Him from amongst the dead and given Him glory, “that your faith and hope should be in God”. Is that not to affect us, that His resurrection and glorification is to have an answer in the faith of each one of us?

R.T. I think it is good to call attention to that. It is because God has glorified Christ that redemption’s work can be spread abroad, from that victorious position. But then it is that your faith and hope should be in God, not just that our sins should be forgiven, but

redemption leads us into confidence in God and that begets praise and joy in the soul.

D.A.B. Could we connect that with what the Lord says in John 17, “the glory which thou hast given me I have given them ... that they may be perfected into one and that the world may know” (v 22) – as if the Lord has in mind that there should be some present expression of what that glory imparted is to be?

R.T. I think the work of redemption has brought us into the enjoyment of the purpose of God because redemption is greater than what was there in Adam in innocence. Redemption has brought in a whole new order of things to be a kingdom of priests – a chosen race. I think redemption gives us a sense of that, what we are – “a people for a possession”. It brings us into the house, into the area where divine affections are enjoyed and it awakens these fresh sensibilities in our hearts Godward.

D.A.B. The way the Lord refers to the idea of possession in that chapter is extremely full, because He says, “I in them” (v 22), and then He says “that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me” (v 23). I wondered if there was some touch to be got from the Lord’s own words as to what you have in mind.

R.T. Yes, indeed. The sense of all that was in the divine mind has come into our hearts through redemption. Redemption has opened up the whole counsels of divine purposes and love, and now as we have an attachment to the Redeemer, as we are drawn to this Lamb whose blood has been shed, I think we are brought into the liberty of all in the purposes of His love.

R.H.B. This verse to which you are drawing attention is connected with knowing God as Father, “if ye invoke as Father”. I wondered if it was what has been said as to being brought into new relationships, Him who “judges according to the work of each”. In a sense all men will be subject to that, but to be brought to know Him as Father is very blessed and new.

R.T. It is very fine. I thought that redemption brings us into the house, into new relationships, and it brings out a new character. It

says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy”. It brings us into the joy of what is inside. We see it all centred in this great Redeemer. The great liberty He has to bring us near and into this holy relationship. There can be no closer link than invoking “as Father him” – that is God.

One who is God over the universe in all His love is towards us. All the resources of His power as God are dispensed towards us as Father. What confidence that would beget in our hearts to be in this line of holiness, and in this line of fear, that we are walking before Him in the joy of His love!

R.H.B. The common thought abroad is that we are all children of God, but scriptures make plain that that is not so. It is those that have received Christ and have known the Redeemer who are brought into this privileged position of the family of God.

R.T. I think it is very good to draw attention to that. As has been said, there was a price paid for redemption. That we are to appreciate. Peter is bringing that home to us. The great cost, and the power of love that has entered into it, that we may be brought into this relationship to which you have referred to, to be in the joy of the house.

D.J.H. The word is “See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God”, 1 John 3: 1. It is His love which has acted, bringing us into this relationship of love.

R.T. “The children of God” would bring us to some sense of the family into which we are brought. We are not only in the enjoyment of that love, but there is a reflection of that love in our souls as we are in the joy of redemption. There is a movement Godward that is an answer to the great work of redemption.

E.C.B. Does not the reference to redemption in Ephesians bear on what has been asked because the substance of Ephesians 1 is the Father. You have “redemption through His blood” in order to apprehend and enter into the blessedness of sonship and association with Christ.

R.T. I was thinking that. It is the great purposes and counsels of His love in Ephesians and He says, “in whom we have redemption”,

Eph 1: 7. There is One there who is bringing us into all the wealth of the house, but then as brought into it we are functioning as free from tradition. We are functioning in living power and liberty.

E.C.B. Why do you think we tend to stop at forgiveness of sins?

R.T. Because we think so much of ourselves, and we are glad of relief. I think there is a need for the gospel going beyond that. The gospel not only brought them out of Egypt, but it was to bring them into the land so that the forgiveness of sins was a basic necessity, but there is a need for the gospel being preached that we have something else before us.

E.C.B. So that in Moses' song, you are not only redeemed from Egypt, but you are planted in the mountain of His inheritance.

R.T. That is the great end, and how early God brought that home to them. So the need for the gospel and teaching among us, that God has a great end in bringing us out. If we do not have that we will fall back into our former ways. We may rest that our sins are forgiven, that we are going to heaven, but we will fall back into ways that bring us into bondage. Peter is bringing that Lamb before them to see that they have been bought from these circumstances to be in an area of living joy and relationships with God as their Father.

T.H. Does this stand in contrast to the law? We are brought into relationship with the Father, which is in contrast to be being under law, which would hold God at somewhat of a distance to us?

R.T. The law effectuated nothing. It required a price to be paid that no one could pay, but there is One who has come in, the Redeemer, to discharge the debt. That was one side of it, but I wonder if in the forgiving us our sins He has endeared Himself to us as the Lamb in Exodus 12 (in the house for four days, and then it was to be eaten) was endeared to that household so that they were ready to move out of Egypt. Would that they were as ready to move through the wilderness to come into this great land that God had prepared for those that love Him!

D.H. Thinking of the cost that has been referred to, there is a very elementary story which I think illustrates this matter as to what it means to being redeemed – the boy who made a boat in great detail, correct in every way and beautiful to look at and it was stolen. Then he saw it in a shop window with a very heavy price on it, and gladly went in and bought it, and he said, I made you, but now I have bought you.

R.T. We used to hear that often in the gospel. It is a good illustration. He has a double claim on us, and he has bought us. As you say, the boy would never lose the boat again, but the boat would never want to go away again. That is the point. Ruth was brought into other circumstances. “Ruth the Moabitess” – she is Ruth, the wife of Boaz, she was made his. Redemption has brought us into other relationships. I feel that we cannot emphasise that enough. He has bought us to hold us as His own eternally, and to be nourished and nurtured with the sense of His love that went so far, to lead us in to the great realm of divine blessing.

E.C.B. In the first part of the parable in Luke 15, as to the sheep, in the Authorised Version it says, ‘And when He comes home’. Is that what God would do with us? He would bring us home through redemption.

R.T. That is you get the best robe, and the ring and the shoes and the joy, when you come into the house. Forgiveness of sins meets the debt, but I think that the appreciation of redemption and the Redeemer brings us into the full liberty and joy of the house. That is something that we need to go in for more. It makes way for divine teaching and brings wealth into the soul, that we are not falling back on formalities and traditions, but we are brought into this living system of praise and glory to God.

D.J.H. Luke 15 helps as to what you have been saying as to something far beyond what was there before. He never had the best robe, the ring and the sandals before he went away.

R.T. These things develop a new character in the saints, the redeemed. They are a class of persons. If it is only resting in the

forgiveness of our sins we may not be showing that character. I think the appreciation of redemption develops a character. Peter goes on to that here – “Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth”. It is not just that there is a keeping of certain ordinances, but there is obedience. I think that is something that the appreciation of redemption would effect in us. There is a new character being developed in the redeemed and it comes out in loving one another and being serviceable Godward.

V.E.W. It is obedient persons who receive the Spirit. The forgiveness of sins is most blessed, but then we need the help of the Spirit to appreciate an affection for the Redeemer.

R.T. I am glad you brought that in.

V.E.W. I was impressed with the constant abiding relationships with the blessed Spirit.

R.T. Falling back on tradition hinders the Spirit. I think the affections developed for the Redeemer and the appreciation of redemption give the Spirit great liberty to develop another character with us. Forgiveness of sins is a clearing of the ground, but then there is an impressionable state made that gives the Spirit great liberty to bring us into the full joy of all that divine love has purposed for us.

J.W. Does what you are saying emphasise the preciousness of the blood? We present the blood as being propitiation for our sins, able to save us from our sins. What you are bringing before us would show that there is much more in it. Would that emphasise the preciousness of the blood?

R.T. Think of the whole system in Judaism, how much blood there was. Think of all the offerings – the great foundation of things depended on that blood. Peter is bringing out here the quality of that precious blood. It grows in its appreciation in our heart as we are brought into this realm – the great cost and sacrifice that has been made develops affection in us. It is really a slight on divine work just to rest in the forgiveness of our sins. It shows how unthankful we are. I think the divine end is that in the appreciation of that work and

the Beloved we would come into an area where we are delivered from all formality, to be in the living joy of all that is pervading in the house.

J.W. Can you say a little more as to the thought you brought in as to the highway. We often think of Christianity as a narrow way and Scripture speaks like that. There is that side to it, the narrow way and few that enter into it (see Matt 7: 14), but what you are bringing before us would exhilarate us as to the wideness of what there is?

R.T. I think it was established in the beginning of the Acts in the apostle's teaching. Not only did the Lord ascend into glory, but there was a highway set up on earth so that amid all the confusion and the breakdown that has come in since there is a highway set up in the apostles' teaching and doctrine as linked with a Man above, where the saints can walk through all the confusion in the joy of what has been effectuated through redemption. I think in the fellowship is a great highway preserved for the saints to be in the enjoyment of all that has been effectuated in redemption. There is great liberty, it says "they will walk and they will sing". It is remarkable how much singing is connected with the redeemed in Isaiah. They have great liberty to be in happy, living relationships with God.

K.J.S. Is not Peter really on that highway? Practically he has his feet on it and he is doing his best to draw others into it.

R.T. What personages are in it! Persons who are in the fellowship as in the joy of all that has been effectuated through redemption are not falling back on ordinances, but the redeemed shall walk, and they are walking in this character -"obedience to the truth to unfeigned brotherly love and loving one another out of a pure heart fervently". What a character is marking these persons on this great highway!

E.C.B. Would you say something more as to what you have referred to as our tendency to revert to formality and tradition, because it is a thing from which we need release.

R.T. I think we all know it in our own souls. When tests come we are tested as to our living link with the Redeemer, or do we fall back

on something past? It may not be evil, and it may have been right at one time, but it is not the living life of the highway. I think Peter felt for these persons; tribulation had come in, as it comes into all our circumstances, and we are apt to fall back and get in on ourselves.

Peter is saying, “knowing that ye have been redeemed”; you were bought out of those circumstances and the power that brought you out is able to maintain you in them in living relationships with God.

E.C.B. Redemption is for us as individuals but it seems to me that Peter has in mind that something is enjoyed in a company. I fear that we often revert to tradition in a company, whereas what we really need is something of the spirit of jubilee, which is the year of redemption. To be able to enjoy what Mr Darby speaks of as a ‘natural Christianity’ in the spirit of holiness is greatly needed.

R.T. It is entered into individually, but it says, “the redeemed”. There is a collective company and each one of them has known individually the Redeemer and their relationships with Him, and it has developed a character in them and that character is displayed collectively too. In matters among us we act as the redeemed, we act at the true level of what we have been brought into through the blood of Christ.

E.C.B. So the enjoyment of Christianity does not mean the importation of worldliness; it means the practising of holiness.

R.T. The more you are in the realm of love and appreciating the One who has loved us, I think that is what develops holiness. Holiness is not turning over a new leaf and trying to do better, but it is developed in keeping closer to the Redeemer, and being influenced by what is being set out in Him.

R.J.C. Would the Supper bring us into the enjoyment of these things. We start with that in the week, the great purchase price that has been paid would be seen in the emblems. We are liberated in view of being attached to Christ, serving Him and serving the Father.

R.T. I think it is a good thing to bring that in. In the Supper and the appeal of the love of Christ saints’ hearts would be easily effected.

Every view of Him unfolding,  
Wakes fresh bursts of joyful praise. (Hymn 82)

That is what happens in Revelation. There was nobody worthy to open the book, but the elders knew, they had confidence in the Lamb, and as He comes into view there is a great outburst of praise and glory to the One who has effectuated all, not only for us but for God.

R.B. Would it be right to think of a link between chapter 1 and chapter 2 of this epistle and Exodus 12 and 13. In Exodus 12 you have the Passover lamb and the firstborn covered by the blood and chapter 13 begins with God claiming the firstborn: He says "Hallow unto me every firstborn ... it is mine" (vv 2,3). We know that that had in mind priestly service, eventually, although it changed with the bringing in of the Levites, but I thought it was significant that God claims in the next chapter those who in the first had been covered by the blood. He claims them there for priestly service.

R.T. That is very good. I think that we should see here that God has put in His claim. Have I answered to it? That claim, the precious blood of Jesus, without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ foreknown before the foundation of the world. There is God putting in His claim; have I answered to it? "Knowing that ye have been redeemed", I think would be that we answer to the claim. What a claim He has put in! He is drawing us into other circumstances where we are in the liberty and joy of the firstborn to enjoy without hindrance.

R.B. You referred to the preaching. Do you think that along with the work of Christ, which is the great cardinal theme in it, there is also a need to emphasise the call of God. He calls us in the gospel.

R.T. The bringing out was the great divine necessity, but it was not the end. That is really what Christendom has done. It is what Israel did too in a sense. They were brought out and then they fell back to pleasing themselves. In the bringing us out He has endeared Himself to us in this precious blood of the Lamb, so that now we are brought into other circumstances where we are

preserved from Egypt and all its influences to be in the liberty of service Godward.

G.W.B. What is being said is very helpful. In the references to Luke 15 earlier, the Father's heart was not known until the son was in the house.

R.T. That would be that as we come under the gain of the forgiveness of sins, we come under the teaching and that opens up to us the Father's heart. What an inducement not only to appreciate what has been done for us but to see the great end Godward in redemption, to bring us to be clothed with this robe and come in to the merriment and joy of the house. We are set up in sonship and in all the grace of divine love to be in liberty in service Godward.

P.M. Does the enjoyment of the Father's heart help us to be representative in testimony? I wondered if that linked with chapter 1 and 2 also in this epistle. There is the kingly priesthood, there is what is representative here in persons who are enjoying what is within.

R.T. We are brought on to new ground. He speaks here of "born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the living and abiding word of God". That is what redemption brings us in to. It brings us to a new standing and develops a new character, so that we do not fall back on tradition and what is current even, but we are preserved in a living testimony having some sense of being a chosen race. How divine love has moved in this way to bring us to be in nearness and serviceability to Himself!

S.H. Israel brought out of Egypt – what was in mind for them was Canaan. They might have got there quite soon, but it took them forty years.

R.T. That tests us. They were brought out of Egypt and they could never go back to it. Redemption and the forgiveness of sins places us on ground that cannot be gone back on. But, has it endeared the Redeemer to us, to see the great object He has in view? The wilderness was in His ways but meant to be short: the great end was to bring them into the land, divinely prepared, where

they would not have any traditions but would be enjoying present living relationships with God.

S.H. They did not go back but they thought of the things they seemed to enjoy in Egypt, the flesh pots and so on.

R.T. They went back in their affections and that would test us all, everyone of us, we may go back in our affections. We cannot go back again over the blood; that has immutably secured as for Christ, but in our affections we go back to tradition and living in worldly circumstances, whereas redemption has brought us out of them, a chosen race, a people for a possession.

E.C.B. What has been said about Luke 15 is very apropos to what you have in mind because the sheep and the piece of money are not capable of the response that the son was capable of. It seems as if Jesus goes on with that long part of the chapter in order to show us what we are actually to be brought into.

R.T. I think that these things are to stir our hearts in the way that God has moved, and the One in whom He has effectuated it all, Him now in His own glory. Sin and sins have all been dealt with, and now to see Him there in present relationships with his own, the Redeemer and the redeemed.

E.C.B. Would you say that the priesthood which is referred to in several of the scriptures to which you had read is unofficial and includes all?

R.T. Revelation 1 is very unofficial. It is an outburst of praise to Him who loves us. Love can never be official. I think that is the test for us. We fall back on terms and what is official; terms are right, but the living affections that express the terms are what counts. You can hear one thing said by one and the same thing said by another, and it is quite different. There are living affections coming into the expression of the terms. That is what we have here, "To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom".

E.C.B. I often think of that kind of thing in relation to the many quotations from the ministry of others which we get in readings. What has it actually meant to you is really the point.

R.T. Has it formed me enough not just to be repeating it, but has it effect on my soul. That is what we have here with John; there is an effect on his soul that breaks out. The Spirit was referred to and I think this is like an outburst by the Spirit in the soul to Him who loves us.

M.C. We were speaking on a somewhat similar subject in the reading this week in Joshua, the crossing of the Jordan, going into the land and the distinction from the Red Sea. Reference was made to Paul and what he spoke of – that they may receive remission of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Me. The point was made that it is very easy to stop after the remission of sins, but what is in mind is that we should go into the inheritance. I think what I concluded from that reading was that it is a lot easier to talk about than to experience.

R.T. What is going to help us? What helped them over the Jordan was their eye on the ark, and that is what we have here in Revelation “To him who loves us”. What is going to deliver us from these formalities or whatever, or even resting in our own needs met, is affection for the One who has done it all. “To him who loves us”. Think of the opening of this book which is going to bring in such woes, but there is a soul confirmed in affection for Christ Who is able to effectuate everything for God.

M.C. As was mentioned in our three day meetings, the crossing of the Jordan was by attraction. At the crossing of the Red Sea there was a certain amount of fear – the Egyptians were behind them – but crossing the Jordan is by attraction to Christ.

R.T. These are well known terms among us, oft repeated, but how well known are they? “To him who loves us”. There is a living relationship kept up between the redeemed and the Redeemer, and it is fresh.

D.J.H. 2 Timothy 2 can be a formality with us, but before the instructions are given it is “Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead” (v 8). Is that to preserve it in life for us?

R.T. I think so. The whole proof is not in terms but in a Person and in persons. That is how the truth has gone through. The truth has gone through not on the terms of Scripture or the terms of the truth, or the apostles’ doctrine even, but in persons who were on the highway who were committed in affection to the Redeemer.

D.J.H. I wondered whether that was in this verse in Revelation 1. It is not ‘To him who loves us and has forgiven our sins, but “has washed us”. It is the “us” that is in mind, the persons.

R.T. Think of John saying this, the feeling that entered into it – “washed us from our sins”. He has not only washed the sins away, but He has washed us from them. He has brought a personality out of that sinful state of things to be in a kingdom, to be brought into a regulated ordered sphere where there is praise and glory to God.

D.J.H. It is beyond the condition of blood and flesh. The shedding of the blood as has been referred to in relation to the Supper, is the termination of a certain condition. It brings us into the gain of something which is entirely new to which sin has never attached. Is that “washed us from our sins”?

R.T. Yet we are enjoying it in flesh and blood conditions. It means that that condition does not dominate, but while we are in that same condition we have been washed from our sins and we have been made a kingdom, “priests to his God and Father”.

B.H.C. I was thinking of what pervaded the father’s house, how the father could say “it was right to make merry”. In the light of all that was found there expressing the father’s love in keeping with his holiness, the best robe, the sandals and the ring, everything there was for the enjoyment of the father’s heart. I was linking it with the overcomer in Philadelphia. It is what God will make “him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God”, Rev 3: 12. I was thinking of what God is doing, we have to see that what God is doing is very wonderful.

R.T. I think the overcomer is a fine touch, one who has confidence in the Redeemer. This book is developing confidence in John and in the saints, in spite of all the woes that are coming in – and what woes they are – there is confidence in the One who shed His blood and the One who has redeemed us, this Lamb that has been slain. There is confidence in that lamb to hold everything for God, able to open the book, able to handle all that is in the book, and yet bring through the saints in living joyful relationships with God.

These elders represent persons who have experience with God, with the Redeemer, and confidence in Him so that they are brought into the joy of all that is in the Father's house. It is interesting that the king went in to see the guests at the wedding feast and he sees that the guests are all, save one, clothed in redemption, all clothed with the wedding garment. They were people who have been brought out and brought in to be clothed with this graciousness of Christ, and what pleasure the Father has in seeing His guests.

E.C.B. At the end of Revelation chapter 5, from verse 12 you can see that they have come to Zion with singing. This innumerable company begin with saying "Worthy is the Lamb" and it seems that they almost run out of words. Then it goes on "To him that sits upon the throne", then "the four living creatures said, Amen; and the elders fell down and did homage". I think they have come to Zion with singing.

R.T. It is almost like the whole universe affected by it. What an effect it is going to have, the redeemed coming into their place and in the enjoyment of the inheritance. These elders in the difficult circumstances that were there had confidence in the Lamb that had been slain. He dealt with these matters at the cross and in His death, but the same blessed Person is there able to handle every matter in the universe. What confidence they have in Him, "the Lamb that has been slain" is able. They have the harps, the bowls and the singing. What fulness in worship and praise to God as the whole universe is brought into it.

G.W.B. What is the thought, generally, as to the living creatures in Revelation. How does it bear upon us?

R.T. I think it would bear upon living conditions among us. They are intelligent and they combine with the elders. It has been referred to the life and energy that should be in the young, but the life and energy that should be in us all as having fresh affection for Christ. The elders bring out experience. These things are combined, “they sing” – I think that is the combination of the living creatures and the elders. They are joined together in appreciation of the Lamb as being worthy to handle the whole matter as having “redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people”. How wide and great the scope of the work of Christ, and it is appreciated by these living creatures and elders.

E.C.B. Has it not been said that the elders and the living creatures are able to give a reason why they worship. It is not just formality, it is something that is in their present appreciation of the circumstances in which they are.

R.T. I feel tested by that in my heart as the Lord comes in – “to him who loves us”. We have partaken of the emblems – is there something stirred in my affections? I often think of that word in Samuel “Arise, anoint him; for this is he”, 1 Sam 16: 12. David comes in and there is a responsive note rising up. That deepens in our day by day living relationships with Christ so that as we come into this area our souls are readily moved to rise and praise Him.

E.C.B. So, while we might understand the structure of that meeting, there is not the least need for us all to say the same things every week.

R.T. There is room for greater liberty and freshness as to all that is opened up to the redeemed. The redeemed shall walk there, they can explore that area, as it were, there is nothing to intrude; they are in an area of great liberty because they are held in living fresh relationships with the Redeemer.

G.S. Hence the setting forth the excellencies of Him? I am tested, but the more we are occupied with those excellencies the more we will be able to set them forth as they have a moral effect in our souls.

R.T. There is a testimonial setting there in Peter, but it has two sides to it. Think of setting forth to God in His own presence the excellencies of Jesus. It is known only by these relationships that have been developed between the Redeemer and the redeemed. I was impressed with the idea of confidence and restfulness that marks these elders in whatever circumstances the testimony passes through, in the conscious sense of redemption, there is a restfulness of spirit marking the saints. There are pressures upon us, even as we come to the meetings, but as coming, there is restfulness in confidence in the Redeemer which gives us liberty and brings us into this area of expanded affections.

I thought the Lord may just exercise our hearts about being developed in our affections. As we say we are thankful for the truth and its preservative effect upon us, but what holds us livingly and beyond formality and terms is these links which we have, and these elders had, and John had, as appreciating, not historically, but day by day. Forgiveness of sins should never be historical. We may be speaking about it in that sense, that our sins were forgiven, but the enjoyment of forgiveness is a fresh matter day by day and being held in a deeper appreciation of the One who has been able, not only to forgive us, but to bring us into living relationships with His God and Father.

D.J.H. Even though they sing the new song and there is such a company here, it says "having each a harp". It depends whether I have a harp does it? As soon as the Lamb is mentioned it is "having each a harp".

R.T. The new song is very interesting. We do not need to say the same things. I think I acquire the new song through experience with the Redeemer, in circumstances day by day; in sorrows it may be, in sufferings in the testimony, I think that is where we acquire substance for the new song, that we have a fresh appreciation of the One who has moved in such love, to bring us out, but to bring us into these fresh surroundings.

D.J.H. So it will be new every week.

R.T. New every day. I do not think we put off the song until the Supper. There should be something in our hearts, day by day as we meet the brethren and in our own thoughts about Christ, I think there is a new song developed by the Spirit.

D.A.S. I appreciate what has been said as to the freshness at the Supper, but what is your impression as to these persons all saying the same thing?

R.T. Do we not all say the same things at the Supper? What are the Amens about?

D.A.S. I was thinking of the way that “Worthy is the Lamb”, is the theme of their doxology, thinking of the wonder of a company where everyone is set in movement of heart towards this blessed Person.

R.T. That is very fine and the Supper should effectuate that. The Supper brings in oneness, “they sing a new song”. Somebody says something – am I in it? Are the saints being carried in it? As we all partake of that one loaf and drink into that one cup, I think we will be unified in our praise. Often some of us are left behind because of dullness and insensitiveness about some things. I think these experiences with the Redeemer unify us and bring us in to this collective response singing a new song. How precious that is to Christ that there is a new song awakened in the hearts of the saints in which He can rest. He can rest in these praises and what joy it is for God to see the redeemed functioning in the true liberty of their calling.

D.A.B. A new song is an interesting idea. If you were to start a new song now we would probably have to listen until we had learned the words, but this seems to be something that is drawn out of the spirits of this vast company all at the same time. I was thinking of the hymn they sang before they went to the mount of Olives. The lead the Lord gave brought them all into that new song. He did not lead them out to the cross, but to the mount of Olives.

R.T. That is interesting and links with what has been suggested that as partaking of the emblems, the new song would be known by all. If we appreciated “my body which is for you”, and “the cup of the

new covenant” – drinking into the cup of the new covenant unifies us so that everybody knows the new song. They know and enjoy the new relationships into which the redeemed have been brought, to live there. That is our position and that is where we enjoy the great outpourings of His love. May we be encouraged to live in it more.

P.J.W. We started the Supper last week with:

Well may we sing with triumph sing  
The great Redeemer’s praise

That was a new song to me as I do not think I had heard it at the Supper before.

R.T. How have you been getting on with that during the week?

P.J.W. We read Revelation 1 during the week, “to him who has loved us and washed us from his sins in his blood”. We have read it again today. It is still the week.

R.T. That helps us about the new song. Do we just forget the impressions the Lord leaves among us? I think He leaves a touch in the Supper in the appeal of the loaf and the cup that develops something of a new song with us so that there is progression, there is coming in to this holy priesthood, there is the functioning in the true liberty and joy of what love has designed to be our position.

### **Key to Initials**

R.Brown, East Finchley; R.H.Brown, East Finchley, D.A.Burr, London; E.C.Burr, London; G.W.Bywater, Buckhurst Hill; R.J.Campbell, Glasgow; B.H.Clark, London; M.Cuckney, Malvern; T.Harvey, East Finchley; D.Hawgood, Bexley; D.J.Hutson, London; S.Hewison, Dorking; P.Martin, Colchester; K.J.Samways, Buckhurst Hill; D.A.Smith, Bexley, G.Smith, Bexley; R.Taylor, Kirkcaldy; J.Walkinshaw, Bexley; P.J.Walkinshaw, Gillingham; E.F.Woodford, Dorking; V.E.Wraighte, Gillingham

# LOVERS OF GOD

Robert Taylor

**1 Corinthians 8: 3; 2: 8-10; Luke 2: 25-32, 36-38; 2 Timothy 4: 8**

It is quite a striking passage we began with – “if any one love God, *he* is known of him”. You may say, and rightly, Does not God know everyone? He does, but the passage here is showing that there are persons who have become distinguished in God’s eye – not through their knowledge. This passage deals with that, “knowledge puffs up” (v 1), but there are persons who I trust the Spirit will help us to speak of to encourage us, who become distinguished because of their love for God. This is open to every one of us. There may be degrees of knowledge in a right sense with us, but it is open to everyone, however young, or however old, to become distinguished in God’s eye as being a lover of God. It shows that such persons are very precious to Him.

You may rightly wonder why we need to be stimulated to love God. It says “God commends *his* love to us”, Rom 5: 8. Not in creation – that does speak of Him – not even through prophets or the Scriptures – they all speak of Him – but “God commends *his* love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us”. The writer of that passage almost struggled with the verse to understand it. He says ““for the good man some one might also dare to die” (v 7). He is thinking of these persons who have gone before, but he could hardly fathom a love that would come out to die for sinners. What reason was there for it? What cause was there for God to commend His love to sinners in such a way as that? No point in giving the law to sinners, no point in sending a prophet to tell them to mend their ways and do better. God commends his love, “in that, we being still sinners”. After five years, after ten years, maybe after twenty years hearing the gospel, still sinners – God commends his love to us in that Jesus has died for us. What a commendation of love! Who could doubt it? May it remain with us all our days, the way that God has commended His love to us being still sinners.

That love has been commended to evoke an answer in our hearts that we may be classed among persons who are lovers of God. That is what the Lord is looking for. There are many persons in Scripture who we could speak of, distinguished like that. God says about Abraham, "I know him", Gen 18: 19. God at that point was going to come in judgment on Sodom. Speaking simply, He was wanting to tell someone what He was going to do, looking for someone to come and share His exercises about the state of things in the world, and he found that in Abraham and He says "I know him". He told Abraham something about it. What a spirit it brings out in Abraham! How did He know him? He knew him because he had obeyed God. It is a very simple truth. He knew Abraham at that stage for his obedience. He was not yet the father of a line of faith; he was coming into that, but at that point God knew Abraham for his obedience. He had presented circumcision to him and he had called them out from the system of idolatry and Abraham had come out.

He knew him for his obedience. It is a great feature of a lover of God, indeed it is a great feature of any lover, the love of obedience, the love that acts not seeking a reward, not seeking some answer, but a love that obeys because it is seeking to please the one that it loves.

There are many persons in scripture of whom God speaks like that, and He would stir our hearts at this time to be among them. I would like to make it simple. It is not through exploits. There are these things, but "if any one love God, he is known of him". May our hearts be drawn to be enlisted in that great company whom God knows, knows like this.

It says in 1 Corinthians 2, how great things He has prepared for them that love Him, as if our love for God is the entrance into the enjoyment of these wonderful things that God has prepared. I would like to speak of Caleb at this juncture. I think he fits very beautifully into this passage. He is distinguished in Scripture as one of the persons whom God knows and he comes into what this scripture is speaking of, the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. God, in Numbers 13, tells the children of Israel to go and

search out the land (see Num 13: 1), He gives them some impression of the great things that God had prepared for them that love Him. Think of how far they went into the land. It says they came to Hebron to explore the great heights and depths of that land. None of them could dispute its beauty or its resources, the things that God had prepared for them that love Him. How gracious of God at that very early point in their history to give them an insight into the great things that He had prepared for them. Oh that they had had a heart for it! What sorrows they would have spared themselves! Is that not true about you and me? What sorrows we may have spared ourselves had we made room for the great things that God has prepared for them that love Him. The nearer you come to God, the more you prove the riches of His grace. If you live on the circumference of things, you do not really prove the great things that God has prepared for those that love Him. But as you come into the circle of divine affections, as God was drawing them into in Numbers 13, you prove some of the resources of divine grace. Scripture speaks about that, “the riches of his grace”, Eph 1: 7. There God was showing them something of it as He gave them insight into the land.

They spoke of the great things they saw, of the wonderful resources of that land, and they brought it back. Think of Moses’ joy as he saw those grapes and heard the report. We have all heard the report. I trust the report comes to us constantly in the gospel, a report not only that Christ has died for our sins, but that there should be a report in the gospel preaching of the great things that God has prepared for them that love Him. Indeed the scripture speaks of that incident in Numbers 13 as glad tidings. In Hebrews it speaks of them having glad tidings presented (see Heb 4: 2). That was what Caleb and these others brought back and they said the land is very good – the things that God has prepared. How it held Caleb’s heart through all the wilderness! He was living in something of the things that God has revealed to us by His Spirit. They are not left as something far off, that we are going to heaven in a day to come to enjoy them. It says the things “which God has prepared”. What an

expression of His love, that He has prepared them. At what cost He has made them available to us! We would never forget that, the lover would never be far away from the sacrifice of Jesus and the way He has gone. That has laid the basis for God to prepare these great things. It says, it has not come in to man's heart. You will never reach it by intelligence only, but Caleb reached it by obeying the glad tidings in that sense. He went into the land and he tasted of that heavenly fruit. May the blessed Spirit of God at this time stir our hearts through some interest in what God has prepared for them that love Him. They are available for all, but they are enjoyed by them that love Him. How simple it is, not your knowledge or your ability, but it is there prepared.

It reminds you of the wedding feast. The king says, I have prepared my feast. The whole wedding supper was there ready, What a feast it was that he had prepared, oxen, fatted beasts! They were all killed, cooked ready to enjoy. That is what the king was saying, Come in. Alas there were few hearts to respond; those that should have responded made excuses. How readily we bring up excuses, but would that our hearts were drawn by His love, the appeal of His grace, to come in and enjoy the wedding, what He had prepared. I can think of Moses enjoying them. You say, Moses did not go into the land, but how he enjoyed it, that good land beyond the Jordan. It is very beautiful the way Moses speaks of it in Deuteronomy as the land that flows with milk and honey, the land of springs and water-brooks, the land of mountains. There was a man who had entrance into the things that God had prepared, not physically, but it was revealed to him by the Spirit, bringing it into our time – how great things God has prepared. Think of how he could bless the people at the end of his life telling them of that great land.

He says, You will come into houses that you did not build, you will eat of trees that you did not plant – the great things that God has prepared for them that love him. Our hearts are far too slow to embrace something of these great things, but the Spirit would just touch us now with them, as it touched Moses to be able to speak of them, to be able to enjoy them. How he longed to go in, but he saw

it, he had an insight into heaven with the saints in it. It says “God showed him the whole land”, and mentioning the tribes in the land, he saw them, as it were, there dwelling. How his heart must have been full to think of the tribes there enjoying their inheritance, these same tribes that he had nursed through the wilderness. What patience he had spent upon them! Now God was giving him an insight into what their place would be in the land. How his heart was thrilled as he wrote that book and wrote Deuteronomy!

There need to be persons like that among us who have some insight, and I think that Simeon was like that. I would like to speak of Simeon as a man in the locality who had an insight into the great things of God, because he was among those that love Him. It says, “there was a man in Jerusalem”. Were there not thousands of others in Jerusalem? The city at that time was teeming with people, but it says “there was a man in Jerusalem” – “if any one love God, *he* is known of him”. There are two people in this section, a man and a woman in Jerusalem, lovers of God who were known of Him. How fine that is! There are persons in localities, and the locality is known by these persons. It speaks of Bethany as the village of Mary and Martha (see John 11: 1). That is how the village was known. There were many other things about Bethany, but it was characterised by the lovers who were in it. That is how cities would be today in the divine view. May I raise the question – Are you among them? In your place, does God look on it and says that is the place where so and so is, one of my lovers? The man in Jerusalem. How precious he was to heaven, and he was known. God was looking for someone at this time in a city that was full of Pharisees, Sadducees and all the rest of them. “Knowledge puffs up”. What a place Jerusalem must have been with all the ordinances, the rituals, the temple and all that was round about it. But there was a man in Jerusalem, someone ready to receive the Lord’s Christ, a lover. That is how God communicates His mind to those that love Him. Here is this man, a simple man. We do not hear anything about Him before or after, but He is here, one of the most distinguished men in the history of time, a man in Jerusalem. There he is, the

child Jesus in his arms. He was there in safe-keeping. There was the temple, the priests, yet all round about the cold and indifference but there was a man, a lover of God ready to receive the child in his arms.

This was not the first time God had found him. These things go on in secret, the man in Jerusalem had been there a long time. Anna had been a long time, despised, maybe not known, passed by by the hierarchy of the day, but there they are, known in heaven, "he is known of him". It was divinely communicated to him by the Holy Spirit, something here that turned the whole system upside down, all professedly looking for the Messiah, paying these tithes and tributes and so on, but they are all passed by. There is the child Jesus in the arms of a lover, it being divinely communicated to him that he should not see death before he should see the Lord's Christ. What exaltation filled his soul, what joy filled him! He was able to look far beyond what anyone else could see in Jerusalem that day. Think of the long history, these thirty three and a half years that would proceed after this. Simeon looked beyond all that. He saw in that child a "light for the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". He saw the land, he saw right in to these great things that God had prepared. Simeon found his place in it. I do not know quite what that place would be, I suppose he will be in the family of Israel, but he saw beyond it all. He saw God's thoughts completed and secured in Christ. He had some insight into His death. I do not think that any one else had that at this time. He says "a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". That required the death of Jesus, His burial and resurrection and there is a lover given an insight in that dark day, into the great things that God has prepared for them that love Him.

There is Anna too. I would like to speak of the importance of persons in the place being characterised as lovers of God. It is the life of the local meeting. As God points out here, it is what He sees in the place, lovers of God, a place characterised by these two persons. It required them to be there. They are an essential part of these ways of God in the incarnation that there were these two

people in Jerusalem who were able to have some insight into the great things that God was doing. It required that there were lovers, few there were it may be, but there were some there who were able to speak of Him. You would like to hear Anna speaking. You say the sisters do not speak in the meeting; no, but they can still speak of Him. Here is Anna making every opportunity. She had been known in the place, may be bypassed by the priests, ridiculed by others, but there she is, she went on. It says she “spoke of him”. These are the characteristics of a lover. A lover cannot keep silent about its loved object: it would be a poor lover who never spoke about its object. You would question it. She spoke of him “to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem”. It reminds you of the end of Malachi; the dispensation was fading, the very last chapter in the Old Testament but it says they spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed it, and heard” Mal 3:16. Those that feared His name, and those that thought about Him.

May we be encouraged to take up these things. It is open to every one of us to be in this august company to know something of divine secrets, to have a view beyond what is around. You could not disturb Simeon. You might have said to Simeon, do not go to the meeting tonight, you were there last night you do not need to go again tonight. Think of what he would have missed. You could not keep a lover away. We should not need to be told that we should be at the meetings. The lovers gravitate there, it is the normal thing that you look for. I would expect of everybody, as they say their prayers in the mornings, that they are thinking of the meeting at night, thinking of the time of release from the daily round of things. That would be Simeon in the place. It must have been trying in Jerusalem at this time, but there it says, “came in the Spirit into the temple”, a man in Jerusalem, just and pious. These are simple things, characteristics of a lover. The lovers of Jesus and of God, have very simple features about them. Also Caleb of whom we spoke, God says “he had another spirit in him”, Moses was known for his meekness. He was not known, in the way I am speaking of it, for the great things that he did in opening up the Red Sea and such things,

but he was known among those that were meek. Love is formative.

It is another great feature of a lover, they are conformed to the features of the loved One. Moses in his meekness, Caleb in the way that he embraced divine thoughts. It says “my servant Caleb”. I feel searched as I speak of these things. What can heaven say about you and me? We are just a member of ‘the brethren’. Does heaven have some records? It has records, heaven has books. How wonderful to look at these books in a day to come and see names in them, and something written against the names. I wonder what God will write against your name and mine? It is open to us. These things are not fanciful. Heaven has its books and it speaks about names being registered in heaven, and as I have said already you can see that persons are known there for their qualities of meekness, obedience, and this man just and pious and Anna because she spoke of Him. Fine letters of commendation these persons would have – not that they preach well or they do this or that, but they are known in heaven for these characteristics and features of Jesus that are shining in a dark day. Simeon regards himself as a bondman. Lovers would always take a low place, “let thy bondman”. He, you might say, was one of the most favoured of men in the race to have had the child Jesus in his arms. He says “let thy bondman go ... in peace”. Love is never puffed up; love is ready to be in a place of service to the loved One. There are Simeon and Anna left in Jerusalem, as God has left you and me, who are to be known as lovers of God.

Paul, closing his days here in the passage we read in Timothy, is speaking of those who love His appearing. That would be another feature of a lover that they have an interest in the things of the loved One. You would not be a true lover of any person if you were not interested in their affairs, interested in the things that belong to them. Paul is speaking of persons who love His appearing. He was looking on to the day when the Lord of glory, the once despised Jesus, will be seen in all His majesty. As I read this passage it reminded me of Daniel, another great lover of God. You could say that Daniel was among those who loved His appearing. He lived in a very dark day

and he felt the conditions that were around, the departure, the love of the most had grown cold, like our own day, and the day that Paul was writing of here. Men, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, Daniel's day was very much like that, but he interested himself in the things of God. It says about him that he understood by the books (see Dan 9: 2). He wanted to know something of God's ways, and he interested himself. It was not that he was a professor, he was not just one who professed to love Jesus and sang happy songs, but he was a man who interested himself in the things of God. He did it by prayer in large measure. To put it simply he was in a day when persons were giving up things, but he saw that that was not the true way that God had been made known. As interested he saw there was a glory that was past, but he also saw that there was a day coming, another day. God tells him about these great kings, and these people that are suffering today, these despised Jews, God says, I have them all in hand. Daniel was concerned about the confusion that there was and wondered how to find his way amidst all the confusion and breakdown, and God, as he was praying, spoke to him, addresses him by name – that would be a feature of those who were known in heaven – God addresses them by name.

Perhaps, and I trust it is so, He is addressing you in this meeting.

We are a company here and it is very easy to regard ourselves as one of the company, but God would speak to you directly. Here He addresses Daniel, by name and gives him an insight into the great ways of God, that Israel, that despised nation, and the despised saints of this dispensation, are soon to come into their place in the ways of God. God, as it were, said to Daniel, do not be overcome.

He was almost overwhelmed by things as they were, but God says, I have it all in hand. So he was not overcome by the breakdown. He knew that things were going to proceed for a certain number of years, but he was looking beyond those years, he was loving His appearing. May our hearts be stirred to think of a day that is coming when the despised Jesus, the Lord of glory will come to be universally adored. What a day it will be when He comes into His rights!

Yet wider praise in Zion waits for thee,  
Her Lord and King.  
Creation too in rest and liberty  
Shall tribute bring (Hymn 75)

Think of the whole universe coming into the great realm of blessing already prepared for those that love Him. Paul was looking on to that, a man despised and set at nought by all that was around him.

He says “Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present age” (v 10). What a snare! A man who was a lover of Jesus, a lover of Paul too he had been, but he was deflected by the present age. How easy it is! We all know that in our hearts. He says “has forsaken me, having loved the present age”. There he is, Paul alone, but he is looking and loving His appearing. May our hearts be stirred to look beyond the present time to be able to be restful as Daniel was that God had these things in hand. So God says to Daniel, “Go thy way, Daniel”, (Dan 12: 9), “But do thou go thy way until the end; and thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days “ (v 13).

What a fine word God gives to one of His lovers, oppressed and feeling the confusion and the sorrows, “Go thy way ... and stand in thy lot at the end of the days”. Nations and kings will come and go, times and seasons will pass, but He says “stand in thy lot at the end of the days”. God is seeing His lovers through, and is comforting them in the present sorrow and giving them rest in His love.

Paul would encourage us here – he says “not only to me, but also to all who love his appearing” – to look beyond the gloom, to look beyond the sorrows, to look beyond the weakness of our body, the smallness of our localities – to love His appearing.

We wait for it, and I believe that there should be greater longings in our hearts. It is not the rapture, wonderful and blessed as that will be, but what a time it will be for heaven and earth, for the saints, to see Him coming in His appearing, coming in all His majesty and His glory and the whole universe answering in tribute, glory and dominion, to the Lamb that was once slain. May we be encouraged, dear brethren, to increase in our love, to be among lovers of God. I trust I have shown that it is a very simple thing, something that goes

on secretly, hidden it may be, and yet well known in heaven. Jude says “keep yourselves in the love of God”, Jude 21. It should not be difficult. I often wonder why that had to be said, and yet I know.

There in the apostasy rising, difficult days, is a very fine word that Jude closes with “keep yourselves in the love of God”. It is all around us, it is in the local meetings, it is to be enjoyed in your own secret history: keep yourselves in the love of God. I believe that was like Moses’ last words to the people, keep yourselves in the love of God. You could write that over these pages of Deuteronomy as he wrote to them. He knew their propensities to turn back, the kind of heart that was in them, yet in page after page in Deuteronomy he is encouraging them to keep themselves in the love of God, in describing that land that was soon to be their home – soon to be our home, soon we are to be there, soon to be in that august company in that glorious home and we will be there, lovers of God. May it increase, for His Name’s sake.

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