

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE EFFECT OF LOOKING ON JESUS

Luke 2: 25-32; 24:15-17, 27-35

Acts 7: 54-60

1 Kings 10: 4-9

JSS The exercise that I seek help to enquire about together is the effect of looking on Jesus. We read about different persons who either actually or typically saw Jesus, and how it changed them. It is intended for believers that we are to change, that we are to make progress. The scripture in 2 Corinthians 3 says, "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed" - that is, we are changed, but not only that - "according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit", v 18. As we go through our natural lives, we know what change is, and sometimes it is for the better and sometimes it is for the worse. Sometimes there is decline, but the intention in our spiritual lives, as believers on the Lord Jesus, is that we should make progress, and I think the change that is effected by being occupied with Jesus is always positive, and it is permanent, and it is always according to the Pattern. It is according to Christ; it is not haphazard growth or change. So I wondered if we might look at the way that these persons who saw Jesus were changed and how we could apply that to ourselves. Of course, it is not according to natural sight for us; Jesus is no longer here; but, by the Holy Spirit, the reality of the Spirit's power, we see Jesus and our attention can be on Him.

Simeon, first of all, saw Jesus, the little child, only forty days old, brought into the temple by His parents. Perhaps no one else understood the magnitude of what was happening, but Simeon knew who was there; it had been communicated to him by God, by the Spirit. Now, I wonder if we are persons like Simeon who desire to come to where we can receive divine communications, expecting to see Jesus. Simeon saw the glory of the *incarnation*; he knew what God was going to do by this Person and he knew who this Person was.

The two persons in Luke 24 were downcast and dejected, and the day was declining. That is not the intention in our Christian path; it is that we might make progress for God's glory; for our blessing too of course, but for God's glory. They were downcast. I think, like us all at times, their faith was lacking a little, and they thought everything was finished because the Lord Jesus had died. However, they soon realised when they see Him that He was in fact living. They saw something of the glory of *resurrection*, and it was that that changed

them. It changed their direction and it changed their outlook.

Stephen, despite the opposition and the hatred of the religious world, when he sees Jesus, the glory of Him, in *ascension*, what an effect it had on him, and what he said! He came out like the Lord Jesus Himself; it had a transforming effect on Stephen to see Jesus in glory.

The queen of Sheba in figure sees something of Christ in the glory of His *administration* in relation to the assembly. Are we interested to see that? If we see it and take account of Jesus by the Spirit, we will be changed, changed permanently, irreversibly, we will be changed positively and we will be changed according to the Pattern. We will become more like Jesus for God's glory.

AMB Some of those about whom you have read actually saw the Lord in the days of His flesh, and for us, by the Spirit, it is to be no less real that we see the glory of that blessed One. Is it like a continuation of the blessedness of the incarnation, that that One, by the Spirit, is available to us as our Object now?

JSS I think what you say is helpful. Just because we cannot physically see the Lord Jesus, we are at no disadvantage because of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. While we cannot see the Lord Jesus physically, our attention can be focused on Him and our occupation can be taken up with Jesus in the power of the Spirit. Would that be like “looking” for the believer?

AMB How much the Holy Spirit - you have referred in prayer to the fact that He is with us and in us - desires to occupy us with Jesus, and to bring that blessed Man before the hearts of every believer. You might say that is a vital part of the Spirit's activities here.

JSS That is helpful; so the Father is looking for us to make spiritual progress, and we might ask, “How are we to do that?”. Well, it is by asking the Spirit and making room for the Spirit to help us to see Jesus, that is, to have our attention on Him and, as we are occupied with Him, we become more like Him. That is how we make progress and that is how God is glorified, in persons who become like Jesus.

JCG Do you think that receiving Jesus into his arms involved that he had a very close look at Jesus in love? The arms would suggest that. And does it stand in great contrast to “there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2: 7), in the world?

JSS That is very affecting. It has been commented too that there is

no record here of him giving Jesus back to His parents (JT vol 27 p146); in that way he held on to Him. Of course, He did go to His parents, but the thought is that we hold on to the Lord Jesus in this near way. I would like help as to the thought of preparation in relation to this because it seems that Simeon had, we might say simply, good relations with the Holy Spirit before this experience. Do you think that is important for us?

JCG I think so. The Spirit would help us to have a close look, but it is a close look in *affection*, and is the way in which we look at Jesus to affect the company of the saints generally.

JSS I think that is very helpful. This was in Jerusalem, and it was in the temple. At the time it was God's appointed place; but where is God's appointed place at the present time? For the believer it is surely in the assembly where the Lord Jesus is loved and honoured. This experience could be likened to a gathering of the saints for temple enquiry, and the bringing in of Jesus like a person bringing in an impression of Him. How do I receive it?

JTB He must have had a sense of the surpassing greatness of the Person. This was Emmanuel in the arms of a man, the glory of that One who was to be forever "a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". The sense of His greatness must have been surpassing, and almost overwhelming, do you think? Do you think we should be impressed? Would that be one of the outcomes of looking on Him, some sense of His surpassing greatness?

JSS I think that is good: the Son of God was here, and Simeon realised it. Do we realise the stupendous fact that the Son of God was here? I am glad of the way you draw attention to the effect it had on him. The first thing, it appears, is that he blessed God, and the second thing is he says, "now thou lettest thy bondman go, according to thy word, in peace". Well, glory to God must be the first thing, but then you see that Simeon is completely detached from everything else; he has no other interest. The world, as it was, paled into insignificance because now he had Someone filling his sight who was supremely greater.

JL Is that part of the import of being "in the Spirit"? We often speak about the Spirit being in us, but there is a shade of difference, is there?

JSS I would like if you could help explain the difference.

JL I have the impression from the repeated reference to it regarding the apostle John in Revelation that it involves being wholly

absorbed by what the Spirit would engage us with, and that must underlie this occupation with Christ and the nearness and the affection that we have already been referring to.

JSS I think that is helpful. Do you think it would involve the thought of what is characteristic with us? We might say it is the believer's normal occupation to be in communion with the Holy Spirit and ask Him to occupy us with Christ. It would become a normal part of the believer's life.

JL Mr Darby's footnote enlarging on the point in Revelation is interesting. He says, "In the Spirit" is a *state* into which he entered', note *p* chap 1: 10. It seems to be total absorption with what the Spirit of God would engage us with. How profitable and blessed that is.

JSS I think that is very helpful: the thought of state is good. So Simeon was in a receptive state; the Spirit had produced that with him. The meaning of the name Simeon is 'hearing' which suggests a receptive person. He had listened to what the Spirit had been saying. Now, what wonderful opportunities we have at the present time to hear what the Holy Spirit says. Think of the gatherings of the saints: He speaks. Well, am I listening?

RG I was thinking of the gatherings of the saints. On Lord's day we have a wonderful opportunity for the Spirit to be operative if our state is equal to that, and it is interesting that two of the scriptures you have read refer to looking on Jesus. Is that not the gospel, looking on Jesus? And then looking on the glory of the Lord: is that not at the Supper when He appears to us from glory? In our day we are more privileged than any other day. Do you think we should be concerned that our state is equal to the privilege we have?

JSS I find that a test because the Lord in His grace gives us these opportunities. The question is how ready am I to take advantage of them, spiritually, and I think that relates to what has been said about our state, and how prepared we are in relation to our links with the Holy Spirit as we come to these gatherings.

WMP I was wondering about the reference earlier to the "babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes", Luke 2: 12. Does that show us that affection must enter into this whole matter? It is not an appeal to our intellect, but all there is in this glorious Person is to draw out our affection.

JSS I think that it is very much a matter for our affections, and how the Father in His grace has won our hearts. What a way He has done it, presenting us with impressions like this of the “babe wrapped in swaddling clothes”. How attractive! And the thought of being able to hold Him, as Simeon did, to be able to embrace Him, confirms the thought of affection, does it not? I think that is important; so it is not a cold or intellectual matter that we have this view of Jesus but it is one of warm affection for Him which causes a change in us.

PAG You mentioned earlier you had an impression about the thought of “salvation, which thou hast prepared”. Could you say something about that?

JSS You are referring to verse 30. He says, “now thou lettest thy bondman go, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel”. “Thy salvation” must relate to the Person of Jesus and what He was going to accomplish.

PAG We know that a body was prepared for Jesus, God's thoughts and His workmanship no doubt entering into that. It says in Ephesians 1 that God has “made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself for the administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ”, v 9, 10. God's preparation would go right back to His purpose, do you think, since the fulfilment of His purpose rested in this blessed Child that Simeon had in his arms?

JSS That is very affecting. How much scope Simeon has light about in relation to the Gentiles, for example, “a light for revelation of the Gentiles”! He puts the Gentiles first. They were going to get the benefit of this Person, but then he was not limited to that; he knew more was to follow: “and the glory of thy people Israel”. That is still to come but what a wonderful thing it is that the light of such a One has been a revelation for us, the Gentiles.

NJH God knew that Moses had a bosom (Num 11: 12), so that he could really carry the people, but this One here is “in the bosom of the Father” according to John 1: 18. God knew that Simeon had a bosom to receive Him. Is that a challenge for us?

JSS Are you asking what place we have in our affections to receive this One, see Him in the near way that our brother referred to, in our

affections, in our bosom? I find that is a test, because this world, as we go through it, tends to have a hardening effect. The world is not characterised by affection; it is marked by hardness; but there is a place that is marked by affection, and the Spirit engenders that quality in us, makes us receptive, softens our hearts, preparing “fleshy tables” (2 Cor 3: 3), makes them impressionable.

DCB What is promised to Simeon is that he would see “the Lord's Christ”. Is that God's view?

JSS Very good. The note is 'Jehovah', God's Christ. It is not anything of man's choosing or man's doing: this is God's Anointed that he sees.

DCB Well, it is the test. It is very blessed that we know Him as Saviour, and perhaps look for Him to take us out of this scene in that way, but God has a view and this is the One that God is going to operate in, and you see the fulness of God's operations in what Simeon can speak about.

JSS I think that is very helpful. The Spirit would draw attention to what the Lord is *to* God and *for* God, what He means to Him as God's Christ. What a privilege we have, therefore, to see Jesus in that way, everything not only for our relief and for our eternal blessing and salvation, but first what He is for God. He has secured the universe for God. What a Person! How much delight the Father has in Him, and the Spirit would let us into that secret of what He means to God.

BWL Simeon really had a very mature appreciation of Christ. His parents had “A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons”. There is that which outwardly is small, but, of course, every appreciation or impression of Christ by the Spirit is perfect, is it not? Simeon really had a tremendous wealth.

JSS I think that is good. I think there is even a suggestion of that in the way it describes him. It says, “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem”. It does not say what his official position was or anything like that, but it says he was a man. There is the thought of spiritual maturity with him, and he has this wide, intelligent impression as to who this Person is. Nevertheless he does not belittle the persons that bring the Lord in. Someone said in ministry that if a brother makes a remark in a reading, and it is a brother that is maybe not thought a lot of, well; we should not let the person who brings the remark becloud what the content of it is, JT vol 36 p313. If it is of Christ, it can be magnified, and

the person who brings it is dignified too, I think, as a result.

GAB Do you think the fact that Simeon received Him into his arms suggests a whole thought? John tells us elsewhere that if all the things were written that could be written “not even the world itself would contain the books written” (John 21: 25), but in appropriating Christ, at least in this sense, you have the potential to explore these endless glories of this Man.

JSS It is a very attractive thing you have referred to, the whole thought, nothing left out, nothing partial. Only by the Spirit we can do that, but I think that is affecting, embracing Him in his arms, embracing, you might say, every truth that can be known as to Christ, and willing and ready to embrace it by the Spirit. How precious!

APG We think of Simeon as being in accord with heaven. In Luke we have “the days of his receiving up” (chap 9: 51); He was received into heaven, and the heavenly hosts were praising God. Simeon blessed God: he was in accord with heaven's appreciation of Christ, do you think?

JSS I think that is very helpful. It says in verse 26, “it was divinely communicated to him”. You can only think of that as having its source in heaven; so there was this communication from heaven to Simeon about this child, and Simeon is quickly in line with heaven's appreciation of this Person; that is wonderful.

DS Does bringing in “the child Jesus” show how tangible this whole matter is? This is not God coming in in a merely abstract way but in a way which can be taken account of tangibly. Do you think this is a wonderful thing to see that this is “the child Jesus”; this is the One who is going to manifest everything of the glory and thoughts of God? It is wonderful to take account of.

JSS I think it is affecting for us to see how available Christ has been made. He has not been made known in such a way that we cannot draw near to Him; He is so readily available. He is the harmless One. We should be willing and ready to draw near to Him and embrace Him in this way.

NCMcK For us, would it involve then the taking on of the great value of the truth of the incarnation? We may say there is nothing the Lord could state here or do. It was a matter of the fact that there was God manifest in flesh. I suppose Simeon had a sort of Israelitish view; nonetheless

for us would it involve that, the greatness of the incarnation, the import of that to us?

JSS I thought that. There is a glory associated with the incarnation. I think we could fairly say that, the glory of the incarnation. Perhaps that would be one of the glories that we have read of in Corinthians, "looking on the glory of the Lord"; well, looking on the glory of the incarnation, seeing who this Person was and what He was going to accomplish for God, everything for God's eternal glory and everything for man's eternal blessing. What a moment!

AMB It is not a matter of a glance at such a One; it is a matter of pondering the greatness of that One. You have been speaking about that, the wonder of God manifest in flesh. That is a matter to ponder and to seek to be deepened in our appreciation of, this One who brings in everything. In Him there is everything that is for God, and He has been manifested in order to secure God's rest and His pleasure eternally. What there is in that One! But then we are brought into it. Are we brought into something of what God's thoughts are for us in Him as we ponder Him?

JSS I think what you say as to contemplation is important; Simeon here was undistracted. Now I know that one of the biggest temptations, and the young people are exposed to it more perhaps than any of us, and I feel a lot of sympathy for them because they are being bombarded with information in the palm of their hands, and they can scroll through it. We all know what that is, and I am not being condemnatory, but it is worth taking a break from that and making some time to be occupied with this Person because the result and the reward is eternal; and it is worthwhile; and it is for God's glory.

JL You said in your outline that the change was permanent; you also said it was irreversible, and you rather emphasised that thought. It might be good for us to hear a little more about that. It seems a challenge as to the measure in which I display that.

JSS Well, I feel the challenge too, but do you not think that when God begins a work in a believer at conversion, when they first believe on the Lord Jesus, that is a work that has been done in the soul of a person that is fixed and unchangeable, which cannot decrease, but it can be added to and it can be built upon and that is God's intention, is it not? How is that progress to be made? It is by the Spirit, and anything that the Spirit does must have the character of what is permanent and eternal about

it. What would you say?

JL Yes, I think that is helpful. I just wanted you to enlarge on that, and it seems to reflect upon the outstanding blessedness of all that is centred in the Lord Himself that can have such an effect with us. These other things that you have made reference to that might distract us have no permanent value in them, but occupation with Christ most definitely has.

JSS The effect of anything else that we are occupied with will end with time, but if we are occupied with Christ, the effect of it will never end; it has a glorious, eternal effect; and that gives us a lever to say, well, what kind of things are worth going in for?

JTB In connection with that, Luke gives us the oblation, but in the law of the oblation there is a unique reference to the handful; the son of Aaron takes the handful, Lev 2: 2. I wondered if that was the residual effect, the permanent effect really, of the Child being received into the arms, so that there is something tangible and permanent from which we can draw in the future.

JSS I think that is very helpful. The hand is personal too; it is unique to that person; the impression they have received is for them.

DAB I was thinking of this matter of what is effective in persons by looking on Christ, and the three disciples on the mount of transfiguration, especially what we read of in Peter's epistle as to his experience of "having been eyewitnesses of *his* majesty" (2 Pet 1: 16), looking on the glory of the Lord there. Do you think there was something wrought in that man's soul that grew and developed?

JSS I think that is very helpful. How patient the Lord is with me! At times I do not realise the magnitude or the greatness of what He has shown me, but in His grace He would even allow us, on reflection, by the Spirit, to see what is truly excellent about that Person, and we get the gain of it.

RG We would be reminded that we are speaking about the One who "did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself", Phil 2: 6, 7. That is the One; it is God Himself, "did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God", God Himself come in as a Man and as a Bondman and displaying all the attributes that God would have Him display, that God delights in. Do you think that should affect us?

JSS I think that very much.

JAB I was thinking of these persons you read of in Luke 24. What Simeon represents is someone who has a very full appreciation of Christ (and we have examples of persons like that), but we may feel for ourselves we are more like the Lord's parents, who have a smaller appreciation. How do these persons in Luke 24 show us the way to make the progress that you spoke about at the beginning?

JSS I would like help about it myself, but these persons were, according to verse 17, "downcast", and they were discouraged, and they mention the thought of decline in verse 29. They were downcast because their hopes were limited to what was on the earth, and because of their thoughts about Jesus of whom they say, "we had hoped that *he* was the one who is about to redeem Israel". They thought that because the Lord Jesus had died, all their hopes were then finished, but my simple impression here is that when they saw the glory of the Lord in resurrection that it made a change with them. It changed their outlook. They were not downcast any more and they were not thinking of decline because while they said that was the reason they had to stop, well they got up the same hour; the decline that was outside did not affect them any more. They saw the glory of the Lord in resurrection, and seeing Him they recognised Him. It is a mysterious thing that earlier "their eyes were holden so as not to know him" but then when their eyes were opened to see Jesus, that brings about a change in them. The other thing to note is that the Lord's interpretation of the scriptures, perfect as it was, did not change them in itself. What changed them was the view of Christ in resurrection. What do you say?

JAB What you say is good. Their hearts were on fire as a result of this. It struck me as you read through to verse 35 that what they wanted to do was talk to others about Him. Do you think, for the encouragement of all of us who might feel tested by the scope of what you are bringing before us, if we get an impression of Christ that warms our hearts, we should speak to someone about it? When they did that the Lord came in and gave them something additional (v 36); so you might just have a small impression, and you speak to someone about it, or a young man might ask a question in a reading, and the Lord loves that, does He not? He would bring in more. Is that how our hearts become fuller and fuller of what you are speaking about?

JSS Very good. They had a taste of something and they wanted more; that is a simple way that it works. The Spirit gives us a spiritual

taste of the goodness of Christ and you might ask, “Where am I going to get more of that?”. Well, we go to where the Lord's presence can be known, the company of His people, and where the Spirit is made room for. It seems to be this view, “their eyes were opened” that is important. I would like help about this thought that initially “their eyes were holden so as not to know him” but then it is when He is breaking the bread that their eyes were opened.

PAG An impression of Christ not only changes our view of ourselves and transforms us, but it also changes our view of our circumstances. Their eyes were holden because they were occupied with the circumstances. It is a very simple thing but I share it. I was thinking as you have been speaking about the gospel hymn:

I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad. (Hymn 248)

He not only changed my life but He changed how I look at the things around me, and that is what He did for these dear ones on the road to Emmaus. They had a whole different view and they went back to Jerusalem.

JSS That is a very helpful way to explain it; I appreciate that. One thing I did wonder about in verse 16 was that perhaps the limitation of their eyesight could have been a result of the lack of them using faith. It has been said before that 'the Spirit operates in the region of faith' (JT vol 73 p178), but if I fail to look at things in faith there may be this element of dullness in my seeing because I am not looking at things according to the eyes of faith: I am looking at things according to natural reasoning, and all of those things end in death; so you might say it is understandable that they were upset. If they had been relying more on their faith, which they had, and which we all have as believers, they would have been able more quickly to see this Person, and, by the Spirit, we can see Him in the glory of resurrection too.

DJS I was thinking of that verse in Hebrews 12 where it speaks about “looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith”, v 2. Do you think that would help?

JSS I think that is very helpful because it says there, “looking stedfastly”, and the note there is 'looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively on one', note *d*. I suppose if we fail to exercise

our faith, we start to look at all these other things, a bit like Peter: he started to look at the wind strong and perhaps other things that were round about (Matt 14: 30), but if we keep our eyes fixed 'exclusively' on Christ, there is no need to look at anyone or anything else. Our exclusive Object is worthy of it.

JL Does it therefore have a unifying effect? Looking at other things might have a disintegrating effect, but insofar as they came back with one heart seems to set out the point, does it not?

JSS That is very helpful; so they were two individuals, possibly a husband and wife, and their eyes were opened, and then “rising up the same hour, they returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven, and those with them”. They bring a report. One of the effects of seeing Jesus is that you are able to tell others about Him. “And they related what happened on the way, and how he was made known to them”.

WMP The Lord Jesus then is presented here as in His activity; He is doing things; He is drawing near to them; He is blessing the bread; He is breaking it. Do you think we should be conscious that there is a present activity of the Lord Jesus? As we look at Him, we see that He has things in His mind and heart for us, and He is actually acting in relation to His own here?

JSS I think that is absolutely the case. How active He is! His activities are all motivated by love and He is intensely interested in every believer and especially in the gatherings of His people where He is honoured. He is the One that walks in the midst of the assemblies. He is active there; He is interested in what is going on. At the end of this chapter He says, “Have ye anything here to eat?”, v 41. He is interested in what is being enjoyed in the local place.

DS The Lord in His grace would always take us as far as our faith would desire, do you think? It says here, “And they drew near to the village where they were going, and *he* made as though he would go farther”. Is that a wonderful thing? The plenitude of resource in Christ is a wonderful matter. It is not just to meet my need but it will take me as far as I desire. This is the grace of the Lord Jesus. He will go as far as we desire in our faith and our love for Him to follow the fulness that is in Himself.

JSS It is very affecting how it says, “Jesus himself drawing nigh, went with them”. What grace! Then He would go farther. The Lord Jesus is very patient with us, but He also tests us, does He not, to see

what our interests really are? It is wonderful when they constrained Him, "Stay with us". You might say that was a turning point for them.

GAB Verse 31 says, "he disappeared" and in verse 36, "he himself stood in their midst". Do you think the Lord in grace will go so far to meet us when we are perhaps on the wrong way, but, having accomplished what He has in mind for us, He would direct us to the company? It is almost as though He says, 'If you want to see Me again, you will have to go to where the brethren are'.

JSS Very good, so the view of Him had its desired effect such that they were now not downcast, but they were uplifted, and their outlook was not ending in death; it was going to be occupied with a sphere of life, a circle of life, where He was going to be the Centre. They gravitate to that place because they want to know more about this One. I think that is an affecting way to put it.

RG Is that worked out where the disciples came to Him and said, "where abidest thou?", John 1: 38? The ultimate of all that divine Persons are seeking to reach with us all is to reach, "where abidest thou?". What a wonderful answer: "Come and see", v 39. Come and see where He is the Centre of God's universe.

JSS What an invitation! And we all have the same invitation made to us. Are we going to accept it?

Perhaps we could get some help on Stephen. He had a view of Christ. I think we could say his view was the glory of Christ *ascended*, a further thought even to resurrection. "Lo, I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God". In the verse before, "he saw the glory of God". What a view *he* had of Christ, but, beloved, by the Spirit, the same Person by which Stephen saw the glory of God, we can have a view of the glory of Christ in His present position, just like Stephen did. And it affected Stephen in what he said and what he did; he makes this confession about what he sees and then he says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And having said this, he fell asleep". He is like Simeon; he has no thought of himself; his heart is fully absorbed and satisfied despite the circumstances by Someone who is outside of the circumstances, Christ in glory. Stephen sees the glory, and he knows that that is his place and he can see the One there who had secured it for him and the One who he is going to be with in a moment. What a wonderful effect that such an occupation should have

on us!

AMB There was remarkable conformity, was there not, between Stephen and the Man that he saw in the glory?

JSS I am glad you bring us to that, because I thought one of the effects of the change is that it always tends towards the pattern of Christ. Does it always bring us into conformity to Him?

AMB I think that is right. He says, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge", which would remind us of the Lord's words on the cross, but what the Lord said, no other could say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34. Stephen was able to speak in relation to his own experience, but it was like Christ's and in the most dreadful and testing of circumstances. It was a supreme, moral reality that resulted in Stephen's soul as a result of his experience and flowing too, no doubt, from the fact that he was full of the Holy Spirit.

JSS There is much in what you say, but it is interesting that it is a moral feature or moral characteristic that is seen in Stephen. There is a certain moral glory in the way that he acted as a result of having the view of Christ in glory, in a place of glory. That is how it works out with the believer, is it, not the other way round? Many persons perhaps strive to first of all be like the Lord Jesus as He was down here and do good things like He did. There is nothing wrong in that sense with that intention but we have to see it the other way round; we have to have a view first of Christ in glory. The good works that a Christian might do are the *effect* of someone being occupied with Christ in glory, not the *cause* of them being a Christian.

AMB That is a very important point. It has often been said, to be like Him as He was, we have to know Him where He is. Well, where is He? He is in glory in the place that God has given Him at His right hand. You are bringing before us seeing the Lord Jesus in His glory, where He is now, and if we have a glimpse of that glory in our souls, it changes us. One thing to say about Stephen is that he was a very powerful witness; the testimony that he bore was effective.

JSS I think that. A person who has a view of Jesus like this must be a powerful testimony as they go through this world. None of us has had to face outward circumstances like Stephen, but it just shows that no matter how busy or difficult your circumstances might be, you might be under a lot of pressure, different things might be pressing in on you, your work or relationships or family or other troubles or there might be

things in the world that are upsetting you, but there is nothing that can prevent the Holy Spirit from giving you a view of Christ.

JL In that connection is it not a great encouragement that each view becomes progressive?

JSS I think that is the intention, that our understanding and appreciation of Christ increases. A simple illustration is the blind man in John 9. First of all he was able to say what Jesus had done for him (v 11), and we can each begin by saying, 'Jesus has saved me from my sins'; but later that is built upon by the Lord Himself; he understands the glory of the Person, and he becomes a worshipper, v 38. What do you say?

JL I think it would serve to bring out the point, but is it an encouragement that all these exercises we pass through lead to some progressive apprehension of Christ in glory? It is illustrated here with the introduction of the "right hand", because that was not known prior to ascension in the same way, but this was a fine view that Stephen got, Christ in His ascended glory, was it not?

JSS That is very good. The right hand is suggestive of what is excellent, is it not, what is powerful and what is the best? That is where Christ is, in the best place.

DCB I was wondering about the range of titles that is brought in here. I was thinking of what our brother has just said: it is recorded that Stephen saw Jesus, but then it says that he saw "the Son of man", and then he addresses, and introduces the address, "Lord Jesus". He is being enriched in his views of Christ as he has his eyes upon Him.

JSS I think that is very helpful. I feel how slow I am, but the intention is that we might grow in our appreciation of Christ. We learn new things about Him, greater things; our weeknight meetings are opportunities to learn such things. We can learn on our own, of course; the Spirit is not limited. But there is a special advantage in being in the circle of believers where the Spirit is made room for and the Lord is honoured, to learn more of Him.

ADM I am just wondering if Isaiah got this view. He says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him", Isa 6: 1, 2. That was the scene of glory and exultation that the Lord has in glory, do you think?

JSS Very good. Do you think such a view as that has a reassuring

effect? It has a stabilising effect. You see a man installed in a place that is immovable and it gives you stability in your soul to see that. There is God's Man at His right hand in glory, His rightful place, "crowned with glory and honour", Heb 2: 9. It gives us stability. Do you think that is one of the effects in our lives?

ADM It had a morally adjusting effect upon him later, and then made him serviceable: "send me", Isa 6: 8.

JSS So these are all the effects of having such a view.

NJH The testimony was that the Son of man was "standing at the right hand of God", but seeing "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" seemed to be a special portion to faithfulness. Would that be right?

JSS Say a bit more about that.

NJH Well, this was for himself. "He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God". That is not exactly what he related to those that were surrounding him, the murderers, but there was a sufficient testimony in the Son of man being there. I just thought God has His own way of rewarding faithfulness. Is that right?

JSS That is very good -

And to know the blessed secret
Of His preciousness to Thee. (Hymn 277)

He lets you into these secrets. The world knows nothing about them. The world does not want to know anything about them, but He lets the believer have the secret of it and it comforts them and stabilises them.

JCG The gospel therefore has in mind to bring persons to see Christ in glory. We sometimes sing -

No earth-bound prospect would we know, (Hymn 192).

Fixing our eyes by the Spirit on heaven is in keeping with what Peter said in his early preachings: "The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus" (Acts 3: 13), meaning that he was directing persons to that heavenly area. Is that important for us at the present time? There is so much to occupy us down here that might take our gaze off Jesus. Is that important?

JSS I think that elevates the thought of the glad tidings with us, that it is not merely for our relief and then that we might be left here; it is to

really draw us away from this place altogether to where our Saviour is now in glory, and where we shall soon be with Him.

GAB It is very touching that “he fell asleep”. When you think of it, he must have been in agony, stones coming at him from every angle, but it does not say that. He did not die in torture or agony: “he fell asleep”. Do you think occupation with Christ where He is delivered him from all that was round about him so that he just peacefully fell asleep to be with Jesus?

JSS That is very helpful; so that one of the effects of seeing Christ in this way is a certain restfulness of spirit and a contentedness, a restfulness that everything is in divine control and there is nothing to be agitated or troubled about. I have been thinking a lot recently about the Lord asleep on the cushion in the storm, Mark 4: 38. He was restful there. No matter what the circumstances are we find ourselves in, if we have seen Christ in glory, we can afford to be restful in relation to them.

NCMcK When the Lord comes at the rapture, the saints will become actually like Christ, completely conformed. They will be transformed into conformity to His body of glory, Phil 3: 21. Paul said he awaited his house from heaven (2 Cor 5: 2); so it appears we will be given a body which will be in keeping with the inward, glorious formation at the present time. Do you understand there is an equality between the two: what is formed at the present time will be equally formed and seen? You might say we will be able to recognise the work of God in persons by recognising the work of God now.

JSS I think that is exactly right and very helpful; so at the present time there is moral conformity to Christ. We ought to become like Him in the moral features that we display down here, but soon we will be in actual conformity with Him because we will have a body of glory like His, and there will be a perfect correspondence between these two things. Our current body is not really worthy or suitable, but there will be a body of glory given to us that is suitable to the moral worth that is being worked out in believers at the present time.

JAB Does this then lead to an increase in what is for God? Your exercise is that we might have our attention more and more fixed on the Lord Jesus. If that happens, and we trust it is going on in every heart in this room, there will be more for God. I was thinking of the queen of Sheba. She said, “the half was not told me”. In principle her heart overflowed and that is the essence of response to God, is it not?

JSS I am glad you bring us on to that. “There was no more spirit in her”; I thought of that hymn:

All thought of self is now for ever o'er!

Christ, its unmingled Object, fills the heart (Hymn 247).

There is nothing else; she could want for nothing more; typically she saw Christ in Solomon; but she is still a contributor. She brings vast quantities and excellent quality for the contribution of the service of God, but the first thing it says that she saw was his *wisdom*: “And when the queen of Sheba saw all Solomon's wisdom”. That is quite a remarkable thing. It does not say when she saw Solomon, but she “saw all Solomon's wisdom”. Do we see that in the assembly at the present time?

JAB That is fine. Do you think then that in all that surrounded Solomon in this environment which he was brought into, there was what reflected what he was, and she goes on to speak about what characterised these persons, and one thing that characterised them was happiness and joy. Someone who is characteristically occupied with this blessed One is going to be a happy person because there is nothing can spoil that joy. You look at these hymns of Mr Darby, or what we are speaking about, and there is a deep and calm joy about them.

JSS She is a contented person; she is satisfied; she is happy; and these persons are happy who are serving and standing before Solomon. I think it is just wonderful that there is a certain glory of the Lord seen in relation to the assembly at the present time. Like king Solomon, of course, it will be seen publicly too. The perfect, righteous, wise reign of the Lord will be seen publicly in the world, but it is seen now, the Spirit lets us see that operating in the assembly, and it is intended to have an effect on us like it did on the queen of Sheba.

PAG Do you think the holy city in Revelation 21 is really the aggregate display of Solomon's wisdom millennially? Of course, there will be what is for God eternally, but there is the millennial display of everything. I am struck by the fact that it is “all Solomon's wisdom”.

JSS It is wonderful in relation to the assembly. Scripture speaks about “the all-various wisdom of God” (Eph 3: 10); that is where it is seen. It is because Christ is her Head and He administers there. What a privilege; what a glory to see his house, the food of his table, his servants, his cupbearers and his ascent! Someone has made a comment, which was helpful to me, that his cupbearers come before

the ascent, CAC vol 27a (Outline of the Books of Chronicles) p313. He likened that a little to the service on Lord's day morning. There is what the Lord has for His own pleasure first, satisfying His own heart, and then He is ready to ascend to where the Father is. What wonderful impressions the Spirit gives us through others that have had experience with Him! It causes us to be like this one: "there was no more spirit in her"; she was entirely satisfied with what she saw. And then she makes a statement like these others persons that we have seen, Simeon and those at the end of Luke who were able to give a report, a testimony, and Stephen able to say what he had seen. Now, she is able to give a testimony. I feel measured about what I can say about what I have seen but it is open to us and then we are able to have our part in this happy company and be a contributor, and bring in all this material for God's glory. That is what is worked in us by the Spirit that is pleasing to God.

CMcK Does what he says in verses 6 and 7 bear on your exercise? It says, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine affairs, and of thy wisdom; but I gave no credit to the words, until I came and mine eyes had seen". We may hear about the wonderful things of Christ, and they may be true, but unless we appreciate them by the Spirit for ourselves, there will not be the effect. Does that bear on your exercise?

JSS I think that is very helpful. She was not satisfied just to hear about it; she wanted to see it for herself. That is a test: a test for me anyway. We do hear about things; we do hear reports about things the brethren might be enjoying in other places or experiences that they have had. Well, what about me? Am I going to make myself available to have an experience for myself? Well, it is open to me. It is a bit like Simeon. He had heard things already about the Person, but it was when he actually saw Him that it made the difference.

KDD You have been speaking about the effects, the moral features and so on. It is about Gideon they asked, "What sort of men ...? ... As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the sons of a king", Jud 8: 18. That is the result of what you have been bringing before us.

JSS I think that is absolutely right. The effect of having our eyes fixed on Christ and His glory produces a moral dignity, that kingly dignity, "the sons of my mother", v 19. It is what has been worked out subjectively and it is seen in reality, concretely, in the lives of believers, a moral dignity like Christ. It is because they have been occupied with

Him where He is and have given room to the Spirit. May we just be encouraged in that!

CAMcK It was in Antioch “the disciples were first called Christians”, Acts 11:26. I wondered if they had been looking on Jesus and there was formation in them; so they came out like Him and like these happy men, and like what our brother has been saying.

JSS That is an excellent example. I appreciate you bringing it in. It has often been said they did not call themselves Christians at Antioch; it is what they were, and others took account of features of Jesus that were seen in them. Well, that is a test. What features are there in me? But there can be some if I am occupied with Christ by the Spirit.

RG “Each one resembled the sons of a king”. Is sonship the greatest glory of all? Is that what we are brought to in Solomon, the glory of sonship?

JSS Very good.

GRANGEMOUTH

19th January 2019

Key to Initials:

A M Brown, Grangemouth; D A Brown, Grangemouth; D C Brown, Edinburgh; G A Brown, Grangemouth; J A Brown, Grangemouth; J T Brown, Edinburgh; K D Drever, Calgary; R Gardiner, Kirkcaldy; A P Grant, Dundee; J C Gray, Grangemouth; P A Gray, Grangemouth; N J Henry, Glasgow; J Laurie, Brechin; B W Lovie, Aberdeen; C McKay, Glasgow; C A McKay, Brechin; N C McKay, Glasgow; A D Melville, Grangemouth; W M Patterson, Glasgow; D J Speirs, Grangemouth; J S Speirs, Grangemouth; D Spinks, Grangemouth

THE HEAVENLY FAMILY

Robert Webster

Ephesians 1: 3; 2: 4-7

1 Corinthians 15: 48-49

Colossians 3: 1-4

I was freshly impressed on Lord's day with the blessing of being part of what we refer to as the heavenly family. We are part of a company of persons who are bound together, with the blessing of an inheritance and a place of recourse that is in an entirely different sphere to what is down here. The earth on which we are is solely a place of our sojourning. Scripture speaks of those who "confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth", Heb 11: 13. Perhaps we are all too easily affected by circumstances, but it struck me afresh as to the greatness of having part in that which relates entirely to a heavenly sphere. No doubt the experience of this would form and characterise us. We have to go through circumstances here in the scene of our responsibility, but these are all temporary things. There is that which awaits final realisation by us as far as that which relates to our heavenly portion is concerned; but, through faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the One who is spoken of as "the earnest of our inheritance" (Eph 1: 14), we are given the present enjoyment, experience and part together in that which relates to a heavenly sphere. It is a very precious thing to be able to have company with those whose "commonwealth has its existence in the heavens", Phil 3: 20. That is where its existence is, in the heavens. That is what binds us together. It is a real thing but it raises a challenge of how much we know, experience and enjoy it.

My mind went to this verse in Ephesians 1, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ". That is really the character of our blessings: they are spiritual. There are earthly blessings and by and by Israel will come into those. There are also, as we prove, and we are thankful for, providential blessings in our circumstances, but they are all temporal. The character of our true blessings is that they are heavenly. All that God has predetermined for us by way of eternal blessing is heavenly in character. We perhaps just touch on them but it is a question of whether we are formed through the experience of them. To think that God has had these things in His heart to bless us with; not things to be found on the earth but heavenly and in the heavenlies. We can lay hold on, experience and enjoy them whilst we are still here. The apostle expounds in this epistle on the fact that they are in the

heavenlies *in Christ*. Our portion is all that we have in Christ. He fills that sphere. All our blessings are found in the place where He now lives. We have been “marked...out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ” (v 5), “taken ... into favour in the Beloved”, (v 6), “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance”, v 13-14. These blessings can be enjoyed now. There is that which in its fulness will be realised in a coming day when we are called to be with Christ, never to go out again, but in writing to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul is seeking to direct their hearts into what their inheritance is, the character of their blessings. We too can know something of it by coming into the good of it ourselves.

The scripture that I read in Ephesians 2 struck me on Lord's day, that by virtue of the work of God in us and on account of all that He has set His heart upon, the heavenlies are really the most suitable place for us, our true home. A line in hymn 7 reads,

Yon heaven is our home.

God “has raised us up together, and has made us sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”. That suggests to me suitability, a place of settled rest and enjoyment. It is the place where we are fully at home. We are not at home here. There are things that we are at variance with in the circumstances in which we are, but there is that which is beyond circumstances and our situation down here, and it is the place for which we have been made suitable. I just had an impression of that on Lord's day morning; the place that is proper to us, for we have been made “fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light”, Col 1: 12. We have been brought into a sphere of greatest blessing, and it is a place where we can be at home. It is a wonderful thing that it should be so. It is something we enjoy, and enjoy together, our sitting “down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus”. Well, it is a challenge as to what we can say about it, but the experience would surely form us in our outlook and in our spiritual constitutions, for it is a spiritual experience. It is not something that man according to nature knows anything about, but it is a great thing to touch in our spirits whilst we are still here.

My mind went to the scripture in 1 Corinthians 15, and the reference there to the heavenly ones: “such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones. And as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one”. There is that, as to our condition, that awaits a coming day, but there is to be a moral reflection of what is heavenly now. When the Lord Jesus was here on earth there was that which was brought to bear in Himself - the

atmosphere, the joy and the resource of heaven. It drew out opposition, which is well recorded in the gospels. But it attracted persons as well. I wonder if there should be something of testimonial character expressed in “the heavenly ones”. Where is it evident that our life is? Do we get weighed down by circumstances here? That scripture already referred to in Hebrews 11 describes those who confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. And it goes on to record, “For they who say such things shew clearly that they seek their country”, v 14. There is that, I think, that should be very attractive in the heavenly ones, those whose lives, and resource and enjoyment are centred elsewhere altogether, and who are therefore not weighed down, or overwhelmed by, that which is purely circumstantial. We always have recourse to somewhere that is above everything down here, and it is eternal as well. All those spiritual blessings are eternal in character. As the Lord Jesus Himself said, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust spoils, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will be also thy heart”, Matt 6: 20, 21. Those treasures are lasting.

I refer to the passage in Colossians to draw out the practical effect of our being amongst the heavenly ones, those that have been raised with Christ, should have upon us. “Seek the things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God: have your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth; for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God”. I suppose that would come about through the actual enjoyment, the proved experience of those things that are above. “Have your mind”; that is where our minds resort to. We have to do with things here of course, but to where do our minds resort, and where do we find our recourse? The exhortation of the apostle is to have them on the things that are above, where the Christ is. He “has passed through the heavens”, (Heb 4:14), and is “sitting at the right hand of God”, in a sphere where all is at rest. He has accomplished all that was necessary that it might be so and there is nothing to disturb it. Although we pass through a scene of great disturbance, we can have our minds on the sphere to which disturbance does not attach, and where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. There is great spiritual gain, great profit to be had. It is where our minds can resort to amongst the responsibilities of each day.

May the Lord bless the word.

Word in a ministry meeting in Buckhurst Hill

8th October 2019

“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED”

Trevor R Campbell

Job 19: 25 to “liveth”;

2 Timothy 1: 12 from “for I know”

1 John 3: 2

It is a very sobering matter to be in the presence of death, beloved brethren and friends, but it is a wonderful triumph to be at the burial of a believer, for while there is the side of sorrow there is the side of triumph; and it struck me that it is a blessed matter that the believer knows certain things. There is a clamour in the world for knowledge and education, which may be right in its place, but all knowledge that relates to this scene is going to be left behind. But there is knowledge through faith that is eternal, and Job says, in our first scripture, “I know that my Redeemer liveth”. And our sister knew that; she knew that the Lord Jesus Christ, her Redeemer, lives. He is alive and He lives for eternity. The One that became dead is the One that is living to the ages of ages, and He has the keys of death and of hades, Rev 1: 18. And our sister, as having been put to sleep through Jesus, is in death, but there is a blessed Man that has been into death before her. That blessed Man, the Lord Jesus, went into death but He is no longer there. Think of that! Think of that word that could be said after He arose from among the dead: “Come, see the place where the Lord lay”, Matt 28: 6. He is out of death: how blessed! I trust that everyone in this room knows the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, the One that died on the cross and shed His precious blood, and went into death; went into the grave but is no longer there because, “my Redeemer liveth”. Nothing can change that: He lives! And our sister knew that and had an eternal link with that blessed Man.

Another thing that the believer knows is the One that they believe in. And that is Jesus; what a blessed matter. Paul writes to Timothy saying, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to him”. Well, our sister entrusted everything to the Lord Jesus, that was demonstrated in her life, a life of piety and faithfulness and a life that was pleasing to the Lord Jesus. How blessed that is, and she knew the One that she believed. She put her faith and trust in Jesus at an early age and that link that she had with Him is eternal and can never be changed. Do you have that belief in a blessed, living Man; the Redeemer, the Saviour? Do you know him? The apostle Paul did, “for I

know whom I have believed". Our sister knew whom she believed; she was convicted about that. Are you convicted in your belief that there is a living Man in glory? And Paul writes that he is "persuaded that he is able to keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to him". That deposit can never be changed because it is safe in the hand of Jesus. The Lord Jesus takes hold of you when you believe and He never lets you go. How blessed to have that assurance.

And then too our sister had the assurance that she would not only be with Jesus but she would be like Jesus. How blessed these things are; I trust they are your portion. John writes in his epistle, "what we shall be has not yet been manifested;" but he says, "we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is". Our sister was looking forward to seeing the Lord and being like Him. In these times confined to her bed what was before her was the Lord Jesus and His coming, and the hope that she had never wavered; and, beloved, that is available for you, to know Jesus now, the One that we are going to be like. We shall have a body of glory like His body of glory. How precious these things are! Our sister knew these things. And may we all, as being in the presence of death, take account of where we are before God, and have this conviction and the knowledge that these things are sure and are certain!

May the Lord bless the word.

Glasgow

19 November 2019

REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED

Neil C McKay

Romans 8: 23

Ephesians 4: 30

Our brother has spoken of the Redeemer living - our sister's Redeemer lives. The great matter of redemption has been accomplished. It is a sound foundational fact, and to be considered as being in the presence of death. The purchase price has been paid in the blood of the Redeemer. The precious blood of the Lord Jesus was shed, and it paid the price in full - as Scripture says, "current with the merchant", Gen 23: 16. It covered every matter righteously before God.

He purchased the field, Matt 13: 44. He purchased the whole field in His blood and established the right to every man, woman and child in the earth, and everything in it; He purchased it in full with the price of His blood.

And our sister was part of that purchase. God paid the price for her in the blood of Christ. It meant something to God to do that. He had foreknown her before the foundation of the world, but as being lost to sin she required redemption's price to be paid, and that was paid in full and the matter of redemption *completely* accomplished. It was accomplished by Christ on the cross to God's eternal satisfaction, and accepted in faith by our sister.

It is remarkable then that it says in Romans, "awaiting adoption, that is the redemption of our body". The full *result* of redemption has not yet been fulfilled. It awaits adoption; the redemption of the body. Our sister's body has not yet fully seen the results of redemption. When it does, she will be raised immortal and incorruptible and perfect, in sonship - entirely in accord with Christ as He now is. *Then* the full results of redemption, the redemptive work of Christ, will be seen in display. They are not seen now; a person coming into this room could not tell who has been redeemed and who has not, and who is a son and who is not. They may be able to see something in the comportment of a person's life as a son (in character), but *then* the sons of God will be seen. The full result of redemption will be accomplished and the bodies of the saints will be changed, immortal, perfect. The full result of redemption is that everything is absolutely perfect and in accord with

God. Redemption is not an incomplete work. Everything has been absolutely and perfectly accomplished through the work of Christ, and that work will involve that our sister's body will be changed and raised immortal and incorruptible, absolutely perfect: what a wonderful thing this is.

We read in Ephesians because it speaks of “the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption”. There is a day coming, at the rapture, when the Lord will come and raise the bodies of the saints. That first wave of power will roll out, raising the dead in Christ. What a matter! Waves of divine power, bringing about the result of redemption - raised and glorious saints. Think of that, a day spoken of in scripture as “the day of redemption”. It has not happened yet, the full result of redemption is not completed, but it is about to be: a day when God will raise everyone who has been purchased by the blood of Christ from the dead, persons changed, living, immortal, incorruptible. Divine power will move - move from the throne - and redemption, the full result of it, will take place. God has paid the price, but then He will take up the claim that He has through the purchase price having been paid. He will lay claim to that body and raise it again in absolute perfection. God will not allow any imperfection: redemption's work is not imperfect in any way. It will be absolutely perfect because the full price has been paid. And our sister, foreknown from eternity, marked out through the foreknowledge of God, chosen in Him, taken up in time, called through the gospel, saved through faith in the blood of Christ, will then be completely secured in actuality. She will be raised, and everything then will be perfectly completed as regards her.

May we be encouraged by these things for His Name's sake.

Glasgow

19th November 2019

SALUTATION

Edward J Mair

Romans 16: 12

I had in mind the simple thought, beloved brethren, as to being saluted, which is a wonderful matter. In this chapter, how many salutations Paul gives; and today is really a time of salutation. We take account of what has been in our sister for the Lord, for the testimony, and for the brethren here. It is to be recognised and be saluted.

The Roman epistle, as we know, is the great epistle of redemption. Much has been said of it, and rightly so. There is only one redemption: "**the** redemption which is in Christ Jesus", Rom 3: 24. Beloved brethren, in Christ "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins", Col 1: 14. Colossians gives us the greatness of the Person in whom we have it. And in another scripture, the end in redemption is that we have been "redeemed to God", Rev 5: 9, 10. And I think the great end in all these persons who are saluted here is that the final result in every heart is to be for God Himself.

You think of the Lord knowing every one of His own, 2 Tim 2: 19. We do not know who belongs to Him, but He knows those that are His. Every one who has believed in the Lord Jesus, and confessed Him, He knows, Rom 10: 9. If you have believed "in thine heart", He knows. He knows every one, the whole host of the redeemed. And not only does He know every one, but He knows everything about every one. He knows if we have committed ourselves to the Lord Jesus, for our life, and we look on the older ones and the way in which they have been the whole of their life subject to the Lord and to His will. He knows everything, and He will reward everyone's faithfulness Himself. And these older ones are a great example for us. They have been here, they have been committed to the testimony and the Lord knows everything about us.

Urijah lived in a day like our own when things were very weak. Urijah kept before him Christ, in type: he kept before him the ark. He said, "the ark, and Israel, and Judah" (2 Sam 11: 11), and he did not deflect. And the older ones have been like that amongst us. We are given examples, like Urijah, who say first, "the ark"; the Lord is first in everything. It says in Colossians, "that *he* might have the first place", chap 1:18. And these dear saints amongst us they have put the Lord first; nothing to be ashamed of it. You may suffer in this world - suffer

loss, suffer things in this world - but here is One who is faithful, and He will reward everyone according to the place they have given Himself. The ark, the people of God, and the service of God; that is Urijah. It is a wonderful matter to have these things before us.

Well, the Lord was saluted by God. It just came to my mind that in Hebrews 5 it says of the Lord that He was “addressed by God”, and the footnote says He was 'saluted of' God, v 10. What a wonderful Person to be linked with, One who was saluted by God. Think of the moral worth and the moral excellence that was found in Jesus. Every day, every minute, He was in blessed communion with the Father - it says, “raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father”, Rom 6: 4. He honoured the moral worth that was seen in Christ. One hymn writer says:

The Father's greetings, honours rare,
Are heaped upon the Son's blest brow (Hymn 350).

He went up into heaven. Think of the Lord going up. He had come out of death and He ascended up, and He “ascended up above all the heavens” (Eph 4: 10), “into heaven itself”, Heb 9: 24. What a glorious Person, beloved brethren, to be identified with in the day in which we are, a day of public ruin and breakdown. But divine things are not in ruin; they are not in breakdown. They are going through, and it is a great thing to go through with Him.

Well, that is the simple impression I had. Paul's heart here is full as he salutes the brethren in Rome and we have read of sisters and there were brothers too, and Paul took account of every one of them. How much more the Lord! Everything that we may have missed, the Lord knows best, and He knows everything we do for Himself, 2 Tim 1: 18.

For His Name's sake.

Glasgow

19 November 2019

(At the meeting for the burial of Miss M Fraser)

"THOU ART THE GOD WHO GIVETH"

Miss Margaret Fraser

Thou art the God who giveth
 To every star a name;
Their radiant host Thou countest
 And none of them the same.

Thou art the God who giveth
 To him that hath no strength,
Thy power and might renewing
 To meet the journey's length.

Thou art the God who giveth
 Unto the weary rest;
As coming unto Jesus
 They, in His yoke, are blest.

Thou art the God who giveth
 To thy beloved sleep,
When sorrows press upon us
 Renewing slumber deep.

Thou art the God who giveth
 A song, though dark the night;
The heart, though sore and troubled,
 Can find in Thee delight.

Thou art the God who giveth
 Thy calming perfect peace:
"Let not your hearts be troubled"
 And fear and doubting cease.

"He giveth grace and glory",
 Divine adorning fair,
Like Jesus, priceless favour;
 No honour could compare.

Thou art the God who giveth
The wisdom that we need.
Blest Counsellor is Jesus –
In wisdom's way He'll lead.

Thou art the God who giveth
To us eternal life;
We have it now in Jesus
'Midst scenes of death and strife.

Thou art the God who gavest
Thy well beloved Son;
As purposed in past ages
Thy will was fully done.

He gave Himself to save us:
"My body given for you":
Such love that love of Jesus
So tender and so true.

Thou art the God who giveth
Thy Spirit – gift sublime –
To those who in obedience
Accept Thy word divine

We learn it is more blessed
To give than to receive,
But such surpassing giving
We scarcely can conceive.

The earth is Thine in fulness.
What can we give to Thee?
Ourselves in full surrender –
Thine for eternity.