

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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JOY

Isaiah 53: 2-3

John 8: 1, 29; 16: 20-24

Isaiah 65: 17-19

John 15: 9-11

NJH We had an extraordinary sense of joy coming into the service of God this morning. One line of a hymn we sang was,

Abiding peace, joy ne'er to fade away (Hymn 173).

It confirmed the impression of how the Lord presented Himself. I thought we would see that there is a basis for our joy; it is not natural joy. In one scripture it is “my joy”, the joy of the Lord. There are scriptures that refer to the joy of divine Persons and they want us to enter into it.

The first scripture we read helps us to see where the Lord's pleasure and joy lay; it was with His Father. As presented in this scripture, He had no joy here: He was “despised and left alone of men”. In Psalms 69: 8, He is referred to as becoming “a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's sons”. He looked for comforters and there were none, Psalm 69: 20. It was a life that was bereft of what man lives in. And yet there was a fulness of joy that lay between Himself and His Father that could not be disturbed; there was a joy there. I thought Isaiah 53 might help on that.

In John 8 the Lord goes to the Mount of Olives and then He says, “And he that has sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him”. He had a joy there that was special and was not disturbed by all the hatred and animosity that was heaped upon Him.

The other scriptures read are the basis of us entering into joy. John 16 is that a man is born into the world; that is the basis of joy. In Isaiah 65 the joy is on the basis of new creation really; what God has done: there is joy linked with new creation. And I thought finally, it is in keeping His commandments that there is joy. You can see there is a real new basis for joy; how extensive it is.

JS It is very good to think of the Lord's joy in His relations with the Father.

NJH Yes, we often go over it, but He grew up before Him. His mother pondered things in her heart (Luke 2: 19), but she did not know the development of that precious life that drew nothing from the

surroundings in which it was, however much she was given from God to care for the Child. There was a relationship and a life that was outside of that natural realm. The Lord says in John, in relation to the wine being deficient, “woman”, chap 2: 4. Evidently the spiritual is superior to the natural, and if there is going to be spiritual joy there has to be the change in us. I know men were given to Him out of the world (chap 17: 6), that is a different account, but the way it is presented here there was no joy here for Christ.

GBG “He shall grow up before him”; does that mean God was His object? He had joy in God being the One before Him. As “a root out of dry ground” God was His resource.

NJH So you might say reverentially the sap was from God; it is a tender sapling.

GBG And in what He received from God to convey to others, He had the first joy; then He passed it on to others.

NJH Yes. We say reverentially, the Father must have looked at how Christ received what He gave, “the glory ... I have given” (John 17: 22), He must have got from the Father. The Father must have witnessed the joy that the Lord had as receiving everything from Him.

JS He was going to the Mount of Olives, and then the second reference to how He had pleased the Father, “he has not left me alone”, would indicate that this must be taken up spiritually for ourselves, do you think?

NJH That is right; that is the only way we can come into it. We have no part in this joy without the work of God taking place. That is why I read first of all about a man being born, and then, of course, new creation. Unless God creates something in our souls we will know nothing of the depth of this joy. Natural joy does not abide, but this joy abides. We are going to leave one another, and we have enjoyed seeing the brethren; we can say we love the brethren: is the joy going to continue? The joy will continue if we are held in our relations with God.

RG-y We are not told much about the Lord's life before He came out in service, but do you think this joy you are speaking of would extend into His private years with the Father? You get some inkling of it in the Psalms.

NJH Yes. It is clear that the thirty years must have been full of His joy in His relationship with the Father. He does say, “did you not know that I

must be occupied with my Father's business?" (Luke 2: 49); but it was His business. He was in the tender, blessed relationship to His Father. Conscious sonship was His joy.

RG-y So when Jesus appears at the time of His baptism the Father says, "in thee I have found my delight", Luke 3: 22. There was something there already.

NJH Yes, that is good. In other words, it was a backward look: He could say that after all these years. It was for God first, and then it was presented to men as He does after the anointing, but before that He was entirely for the pleasure of His Father.

JTB Does Psalm 21: 6 help: "thou hast filled him with joy by thy countenance"? I was just following on the remark that has been made about the uninterrupted disposition between the Father and the Son, and the uninterrupted relationship which exists between the two Persons; there was fulness of joy.

NJH Yes; it says, "For thou hast made him to be blessings for ever; thou hast filled him with joy by thy countenance." He knew that in these thirty years. You might say, 'What could His mother take in?'. She could witness to the perfection, and that was contributive to the Acts; that was a treasure that was brought into the assembly (chap 1), but what was God's portion, the Father's portion? In becoming Man He takes the place of Son; that was uniquely with the Father, which must have been infinite joy. You cannot measure it. And it is that quality of joy that we are intended to come into; He says, "that my joy may be in you", John 15: 11.

JAB Would it be right to think that the Lord Jesus still has joy in His relationships with His Father? You are not talking about what is historical are you?

NJH No, it never ceases. From what we sang it will abide; it says, 'Abiding peace, joy ...'; that is what we come into, but it was always with Christ. His joy is in the presence of the Father at this moment.

JAB And when He goes there in the service of God, and brings a praising company of sons, we have joy; but much more important is the Father's joy in Him, and His continuing joy leading that praise to the Father. What you are speaking about has never stopped, and will never stop for all eternity.

NJH And nothing will interrupt it; nothing. And I think there is a

suggestion in Isaiah 65 of joy in new creation, and that is eternal.

DBR It is a root out of dry ground. I wondered if the matter as to mingling would come into it. He was not relying on the dry ground; there was that in the Lord that was mingled with oil. No doubt the reference is to the energy of the Spirit, the manhood of Christ: would that be what sustained the Lord in His joy, do you think?

NJH The mingling was from the beginning; it is that order of manhood, the flour, mingled with oil, Lev 2: 4. That remained: the anointing later did not change Christ. It changes us, it changes how we appear, whether it is in the power of the Spirit or otherwise, but with Him it was perfect; the mingling was there.

DBR In that sense He was not dependent on what was round about Him. His Father's joy, His joy in the Father's relationship, this inward character of things marked the humanity of Christ; a tender sapling. I thought it might link with the thought of the mingling.

NJH I am sure that helps. You get a sense that this life was wholly independent of anything surrounding Him, it was perfection in itself and did not become affected by the hardness around it, the unresponsive stony ground as it were; dry ground is unresponsive. You cannot do much with dry ground, but here the mingling is there; there is energy in the Spirit.

IMS Was it a life of faith? That would have entered into those thirty years.

NJH Yes, He is the Leader and Completer of faith. But in these early years you see the Father and the Son in holy relationship together, causing each other immense joy. I am not saying faith was not there, for He is viewed as the Leader and Completer of it.

IMS It says, "The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places", Psalm 16: 6. Was that part of what we are speaking of?

NJH The Lord Jesus 'had His own blessed life with the Father, outside the path of dependence and subjection and responsibility which He had assumed here', JT vol 8 p7. His acceptance of what the pathway placed on Him was marked by faith. We are placed in a certain environment to act in faith. But I have got a feeling here that it was a life that was peculiarly set out as we have said already, as to conscious sonship, and that is blessed.

JAG Do we get a glimpse of it when He was twelve years old? He

was content to remain behind in Jerusalem, and they marvelled at the intelligent answers that He could give them, Luke 2: 47. All that would relate to the mingling.

NJH Yes, exactly. He listened, hearing and asking them; He did not interrupt or speak first; the grace of Christ was shown at that age. But it was conscious sonship. The questions were answered, but the teachers could not contribute; the dry ground was still there. The teachers in Jerusalem could not contribute to the preciousness of this life as it stood with the Father.

JD Do you think what we are speaking about is in any sense what we read about last night, “for my yoke is easy”, Matt 11: 30? I always wondered why the Lord should say that when His path was so difficult, but what we referred to is the joy He had with His relationships with the Father which was always undisturbed, do you think?

NJH Yes, the yoke must involve restriction. For Him it was a pleasure to be restricted. It is that we should take on His yoke; what He wore we should wear; it is as simple as that. But with us that involves that our will is to be broken to do that. He had no will in that way; it was the Father's will that dominated. So it shows a different type of manhood that we are talking about.

GAB The fact that these thirty years are largely unrecorded has its own meaning for us. It is something that we cannot fully enter into; it was something between the Father and Himself.

NJH Yes. The first right is the Father's portion for Himself from that life, and nevertheless His life is set out in some way as an example to us. We must have our quiet periods in our life. The young people are under tremendous stress with school and employment, but we must have our quiet times in our life, and I think that is vital in the pathway of faith. But here it is just the delight that the Father had in a man here in conscious sonship, and a relationship that could not be disturbed.

DTP It is very blessed that the greater part of the Lord's life is unknown, but there is particular joy for the Father and for the Spirit, and also for angelic hosts. They were aware of what was proceeding, but there was something distinctly special for the Father and the Spirit.

NJH John the baptist had to be hidden from Israel: “he was in the desert until the days of his shewing to Israel”, Luke 1: 80. But this relationship that the Son was in with the Father was impossible to intrude into. This was a relationship that stood in its integrity and

preciousness.

RT Did He not bring this joy in with Him when He came into the world? The whole heavenly host was affected by seeing Someone who had come into this world bringing joy and peace with Him. The angel says, "I announce to you glad tidings of great joy", Luke 2: 10. It was as if they saw a new dispensation opening up at the incoming of this Person.

NJH That is what we will come to when a man is born; there is a new development. I think what you say is good. The angels anticipated something that was absent everywhere else. There was a new change in the creation and He who was coming into the creation was the Creator Himself.

JDG They all went to their own homes; the Lord went to the Mount of Olives. He searched out that area where His joy could be full.

NJH That is so. He spent the night there, and in the morning He came back. He went to the Mount of Olives, and then "early in the morning he came again into the temple", John 8: 2.

JDG He went to that area which He really drew His satisfaction from.

NJH His manhood was sustained by that relationship, and that is extraordinary. How could Moses, a man of like passions as ourselves, be sustained forty days up the mount? Well, God can do it! Think how much more a life of thirty years sustained. He went up the Mount of Olives, and early in the morning He came again, He was sustained in that relationship with His Father.

QAP At the moment He died, He said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit", Luke 23: 46.

NJH Yes; that is Luke's account. But the work of atonement still had to be fulfilled, and involved the burial, the putting out of God's sight vicariously the man that could not be in communion and in the joy of heaven. In His burial He had to remove every man that could not please God, and could not enter into the joy of the Father. He has introduced a new order of man; even at the incarnation heaven was astir, the angels knew, Someone was coming in. The angels knew how men live, and their desperation, lack of joy, sorrow and everything; and here is Someone coming, and He brings the joy into the creation in Himself.

JAG What do you say about the fact that He endured the cross, "in

view of the joy lying before him ... having despised the shame", Heb 12: 2? He is going to exercise the priesthood which is a very blessed thing for Him. Then, of course, we could say He is going into final conditions in the full substantiality of it.

NJH Well, certain things we have to separate carefully in our minds, as you know. For instance, in the temptations, in Mark 1: 12, He is driven by the Spirit; which brings out His holy nature. In Luke 4: 1 He is led, showing submission, "led by the Spirit into the wilderness", in submission in obedience to the will of the Father. And then in Matthew 4: 1 He is carried. It brings out the holy perfection of what was involved in the will of God for Him. "Jesus was carried up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil" shows the power of the Spirit behind it. But it was all in the will of God to go through and endure that. Even in that His perfection stood, because He was true to the joy and the relationship He had with His Father. It could not be breached.

JAG Does that bear on the joy that was set before Him?

NJH Yes, that would be anticipative of others coming into it. The difference between the disciples in the Acts and what they were in the gospels is quite marked, because there was something of the joy entering into their souls after Jesus was raised. His anticipated joy would include the assembly.

JAG He endured the cross and all the awfulness that that meant, because of the joy that was set before Him; the joy must be something tremendous.

NJH Yes, exactly, because of the awfulness that lay in that matter in the cross, the awfulness of it, and of going into the grave.

CKR Would the joy set before Him also connect with His glorification? The sentence in Hebrews 12 goes on from what He endured to "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God", v 2. Therefore in His holy emotions and feelings He would long for that position, where the joy could be enjoyed on a new basis because redemption and everything has been accomplished.

NJH Exactly. He entered into it, and then we are brought into it. Yes, that is very helpful. The joy of it meant that others were going to come into it, otherwise we would be everlastingly out of the presence of God.

JAG Would it bear then on the fact that He was going to be the great Accomplisher for the whole purpose of God?

NJH Yes, it would. The joy of everything that was in the heart of God would be secured, but the cross stood in the way, and that is sobering. But, just for the moment, in Isaiah 53 and in John 8, it is what He was in His life here: these thirty three and a half years of perfection, and that blessed humanity sustained by the Father's joy as well as His own.

PM Would it be right to say that the cross and the shame were accorded to Him by man, but He was working out with God what would be for the Father's pleasure, so that sons should come in, men should come in, to enjoy relationships with His Father and have that relationship as their own?

NJH Yes, that helps. What man awarded was the cross, and "men appointed his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death", Isaiah 53: 9. But He had to go through with that, and He comes out of death and says, "my Father and your Father", John 20: 17. That must have been expressed with supreme joy.

PM He had so much enjoyed that relationship personally, and we do not exactly enter into that, but He was going to bring men in to enjoy what it was to have joy in the relationship that He had with the Father. How wonderful that must have been to the heart of Christ.

NJH That is very blessed, because He participated in that relationship that we come into according to purpose: He came into sonship. That is the level. We have got to see that there is what is peculiar between the Father and the Son, and the joy relating to it, but we are brought into something of the joy of it. It is not a lower joy; it is spiritual joy.

DCB Do we get some sense of the joy in John 17? He had joy in speaking to the Father, and hearing from the Father, but then He can say, "the glory which thou hast given me I have given them" (verse 22) as our introduction also into that same joy and relationship.

NJH And "that they may be one". It must be by the Spirit; so He has got a whole wealth of thoughts, relationships, and persons in His mind in what He does. I think the joy lies in that whole area. I think John 17 is a very good example. He spoke to His Father with joy.

JB I was just thinking of how Isaiah 53 speaks of how "we esteemed him not". A change has to come about in our souls as to what is truly for God. I was thinking of how the cross meets it all, does it not?

NJH Yes, Isaiah 53 is the expression of the remnant. You may say that the remnant will come up to something, but even they had to say that there was “no beauty that they would desire Him”; by nature there is nothing. The Lord does not minister to nature as such. He did consider for the bodies of men; He did heal illnesses amongst men and raise the dead, but what He sets out is a whole order of life in which nature has no part. So we have to say that we were the same, “we esteemed him not”; we did not appreciate what was in Christ, and then God operated. And I think that is what we come to in Isaiah 65, that God creates, He works something out, and that is where joy comes out in the soul.

RDP I was just thinking how the temptations were very subtle because it says, “by these things men live”, Isa 38: 16. The thought of bread and all these things God would give to Him. And then that third one which really represented something that was taking man right out of God's hands, but His recourse was immediately to God. So I was just thinking of the temptations: the devil's attack really aimed at that, this side of things.

NJH Yes, it did. Jesus was in conscious sonship during the temptations. At that time He was in conscious sonship. We need to preserve the truth that He went through in perfection. He was made sin on our account. But in His suffering He was perfect. We have got to fall on our faces before such a holy matter, when His soul was made an offering for sin. Up to that point He was in conscious sonship, and whatever He met, assailed by the devil and by men, did not affect His relationship with God. Otherwise we are going to fall in to the problem that came in at the beginning of the recovery.

RT Mr Darby says,

Sonship, in conscious nature,
His words and ways declare. (Spiritual Songs p32)

It is what you are saying; it is exemplified in His words and in His ways, but there was a nature there that was entirely different.

NJH Thank you; that is a great help to me. You can see that we are to preserve that precious life otherwise we will get mixed up. It is only on the cross that He suffered for sin, and there was the forsaking of God and the darkness, and that is the truth that we stand on. Before that whatever men did, nailing Him to the cross and all that man did to Him, and accusations, and the temptations of the devil, did not affect Christ's enjoyment of His relationship with His Father.

GBG And for Christians, Christian responsibility is carried out in the enjoyment of our relationship with divine Persons, relationship with the Father; it is not the other way round. Christ is a model for us in that. All Christian responsibility is carried out in the enjoyment of relationship.

NJH Quite so. We should look at John 16 as to a man being born. He says, “ye will be grieved, but your grief shall be turned to joy. A woman, when she gives birth to a child, has grief because her hour has come; but when the child is born, she no longer remembers the trouble, on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world”. Is that not wonderful?

JCG There is the well known quotation, “weeping cometh for the night, and at morn there is rejoicing”, Ps 30: 5. Is there a sense in which the sorrow is limited? It is defined and confined in that sense, but there is no sense in which the morning is limited is there?

NJH This is really a new start. A man born into the world is a new start.

PAG I was just wondering if there was a connection between the joy between the Father and the Son and the fact that God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His companions, Psalm 45: 7. So He says, “I do always the things that are pleasing to him”.

NJH Yes, that is a good scripture, we are coming through to that, and what has been referred to, not only His resurrection, but His ascension. He has now secured a company where He can be anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions. You can see how this joy is going to permeate. It is going to permeate the circle. We had a sense of that this morning. The joy was permeating the circle and it was expressed throughout the occasion. I thought it was quite remarkable that there was a depth of joy that the world cannot take from you and they cannot give it. They will attempt to replace it. The young people and all of us need to remember that.

JAG Joy is, and it is often claimed that it is, the consciousness of divine approbation. There was no honey in the oblation, and if the Lord supports us it is His power, and it is the blessedness of knowing that you are in the favour of God; is that right?

NJH You can understand the reference to a man born; it says “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you”. And then He brings in the thought of asking. They had not asked in His name, but He says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask the

Father in my name, he will give you”, and then He says “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”. It shows how you have got a new pathway, new approval.

JAG So all heaven is available to you.

NJH Yes, a new order of things; because a man has been born into the world.

JW Would this scripture bear on how it is worked out in the disciples; a man shall have been born into the world? It is seen in the Acts: even when they were persecuted, they were marked by joy.

NJH Yes, they were. In that sense the man being born was going to be the result in these disciples of the Lord, the effect of it.

JW I was just wondering if we could apply it to ourselves. There is much sorrow among the saints, but do you think the Lord has in mind that something should be reached in our souls which would be of this character?

NJH Yes, I am glad you spoke of that because there are a lot of hearts going through deep waters just now, and much bodily illness, and we should keep it very real in our minds that there is going to be a result from it, that it should not affect our relations or our joy with the Lord and with the Father, but that we are on our faces. Not only that we can ask the Father, but He says now that they can ask in His name: “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”.

JDG Should we ask in His Name? It is a new thought, a new beginning. I think the Father counts that Name so precious He must respond to the request. If we ask in His Name it brings in that blessed Man who has secured everything for God. Go into His presence and ask Him in His Name.

NJH That is good. It brings the whole system so close. It is a mediatorial system. They had walked three and a half years with Him and now He is leaving them and He says, 'Ask in my Name, hitherto you have not asked'; “ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”. How the Lord was available to them.

RHB I was just thinking that in the first scripture that you read the Lord is actually spoken of as “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”, is He not? And the sorrows that He encountered He felt in a deeper way than any, but they did not interfere with His joy. Is that the point you are

making: there was a relationship that was unaffected by that, although the sorrows were deeply felt?

NJH “Man of sorrows” is a very touching description of the Lord, is it not? “Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” But all along that perfect life there was a holy joy in relationship with His Father. As our brother has said, there is sorrow and pressure amongst us. Well, it should not disturb our relations with God; or our relationships together; that is important. “Ask in my name” (John 14: 31); “ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”.

RHB And He said prophetically, did He not, “To do thy good pleasure, my God, is my delight”, Psalm 40: 8? That really spans the whole of His life.

MCW I was just looking at this verse 22: “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you”.

NJH Is that not wonderful?

MCW Wonderful indeed! He does not only say that they would see Him again (John 16: 19), but “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice”. It is joy in coming to His own, and suddenly the whole picture is changed, the grief is gone, and we have joy.

NJH That confirms what has already been said, and what we had this morning: the Lord had joy as coming in, and He shared joy with us. “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice”; that is a good touch.

DBR “I will see you again”: the whole potential is reached. It is not exactly a man child: it says, “the child is born”, and then following it says, “on account of the joy that a man has been born”. Think of what it must mean to the Lord's heart when He sees some potential realised, and some maturity, do you think, developed amongst the saints? The pressures would bring about maturity if we are with God. God will bring about maturity: a man will be born.

NJH Yes, that is good. A man is born. Manhood in the Acts in the twelve is quite different from what the disciples were in the gospels: they were men. The Lord is pleased to refer to men, but here it is manhood.

DBR A man shall be born; it would really be manhood taking on the features of Christ.

NJH Yes. He would see men when He came in there in John 20; He

saw men there after Himself. He could breathe into them, the life of that man, characterising manhood in the saints. The joy that lay before Him included manhood in the saints. The joy is in seeing men; a man born.

RT In our experience would this be like the prodigal returning? The robe is brought out, the ring and the shoes, the house door open to us. I was just thinking of the joy of the Father, and the joy of the son. It is not just our sins forgiven, but in our experience we come into the embrace, Luke 15.

NJH Yes, that is good, and they began to make merry; it did not end. It shows that things are meant to continue in this order of things.

JCG Do you think that the Lord is pointing the way in His lifting up His eyes to the Father? We are preserved in relation to communion with divine Persons. The Lord speaks about His peace; we maintain that as we have relations with Christ and the Father and the Spirit. "These things Jesus spoke, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father", chap 17: 1. It brings out that He is pointing the way.

NJH Yes, they heard Him saying that. There were only three taken up on the mount of transfiguration - that was a special privilege given - and when He went forward at Gethsemane, but here they must all have heard this prayer; wonderful matter!

DBR Going on to Isaiah, do you think we need to see that the Spirit works according to the pattern of new creation? He does not refine our flesh; He does not refine our nature: it is manhood according to God. That really involves the principle of new creation, do you think?

NJH Yes, it is the very figure that is used; "on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world" would mean that there it is a new order that is started.

DBR "So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation", 2 Cor: 5: 17.

NJH Yes, it is a new order.

JAG "I count myself happy, King Agrippa", Acts 26: 2; is it an example of the Lord's joy coming through in persons?

NJH Yes, Paul was happy.

JAG He wanted everybody to be happy.

NJH Yes; I think he was conscious of his relationship with the Lord and with the Father at that very moment, so that he wanted everyone

else to be as he, “without these bonds”, v 29.

RH Would this joy relate to “the old corn of the land”, Josh 5: 11? It is in relation to Christ in His own circumstances.

NJH Yes, it gives you a sense it has been there long before you; “the old corn of the land” was there before you got into the land, and there is a joy in that: you partake of that new food. Joy is needed to be sustained. So much comes in on Monday morning, things come in, but we do not want that joy interrupted. The Lord shared His joy with us this morning; that is what we felt.

IP I was thinking of that verse in the next chapter: it is “my joy fulfilled in them”, verse 13.

NJH The Lord's joy was fulfilled in us this morning.

IP I was thinking about that, the joy in which the Lord Jesus was received. We are to enter into something of that joy, are we not?

NJH Yes, then there is the Father's joy; He would want to share His joy that He finds in Christ, would He not? The Father would say, 'I am enjoying Christ so much I want you to come into that joy'. It is wonderful that divine Persons want us to enjoy what they are enjoying, and to enter into it.

RJC The Lord says “your heart shall rejoice”; is it a deep inward joy? Earthly joy plays on the natural emotions of men, but this is a settled joy, “your heart shall rejoice”.

NJH Yes, that is good; it is the seat of pure affections that He is referring to. It is not the lusts, and everything that marks man after the flesh: it is purified affections, and it is the heart that is affected.

RDP There is joy in relation to a Christian's life. For instance, having occasions like this can be very exhilarating, but there is an outward character to them, but what we have been speaking about is joy fulfilled *in* them. Circumstances wax and wane and change; even our bodies change, but this joy means that no circumstance can touch it. I liked what our brother said, “my joy fulfilled in them”.

NJH Yes, that is good. I have thought a lot about these elder brethren that have been buried recently in this area. They have finished their course in the testimony, and that was valuable. They were sustained while the outward was weakening; the inward was renewed day by day. Joy has to be maintained, and I think

consciousness of a relationship with divine Persons will give us a shining; oil causes the face to shine, Ps 104: 15. There is a joy you have got that the world cannot give.

JCG It comes out as a steady influence in the face of the troubles that many young people meet in relation to employment, business and other pressures. Habakkuk brings it out:

Though the labour of the olive-tree shall fail,
And the fields yield no food,

it goes on -

Yet I will rejoice in Jehovah,
I will joy in the God of my salvation, chap 3: 17, 18.

That is a person who is in the light of new creation, and is bearing it, is it not?

NJH Yes, Habakkuk is a good scripture to refer to. If everything is lost materially it does not affect what he has got in his relations with God.

Now we should go on to Isaiah 65. It says, "But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create".

JAG Is what we are speaking about what is called eternal life?

NJH Yes, you are really living in the love of God in eternal life. You are enjoying it; you are actually enjoying it. Every other life is spoiled, it is broken into; the value of it is so much lost. But the real thing, eternal life, is something you are enjoying with God.

JAG He is eternal life.

NJH Yes He is. "The true God and eternal life" (1 John 5: 20), both in Christ. Here it is, "But be glad and rejoice ... in that which I create". Then it says, "For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy". Has not the recovery effected something very precious? We sit down together and speak things over, and think of what has entered into the exercises of those that have gone before, especially of what we might call the fathers of the recovery. They went through deep exercises, and we have been recovered to the truth. It should be a joy to us. How can you give it up? God says, "For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy". And the truth belongs to all, and all should walk in its light.

JW Does what you say bring out that God Himself rejoices in it. We can rejoice in what God is rejoicing in. This is our work, is it?

NJH Exactly, He says “I will rejoice over Jerusalem”; that is after He says “I create Jerusalem”. “I will rejoice over Jerusalem, and will joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying”. What a place Jerusalem is going to be in a day to come.

JW There is something in the assembly now.

NJH Yes, that is right; we value our links together; we are created, God's workmanship. I think we need to look at these things. In the working out of exercises we can lose the thought that we are actually God's workmanship, and if our wills come in we need to help one another, so that these things cease, and we are brought under subjection to Christ. I just like this thought, “I will rejoice over Jerusalem”.

RT Does it culminate in “the joy of the bridegroom over the bride”, Isa 62: 5?

NJH Yes, that is a good.

RT His heart was satisfied. We spoke about the joy that was lying before Him, but His heart was satisfied, and Jerusalem is created and rejoicing as well, is it not?

NJH Yes, what a place it will be in a world to come. Think of the centuries: Jerusalem razed to the ground and attacked, and there has been no peace there for centuries really.

MCW There is a lovely touch in Nehemiah, God had made them to rejoice: “And the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off”, Neh 12: 43.

NJH That is a good reference; joy is there. That is a testimony to put out because it is God that has given you the joy. It is not created by man or associations of men; it is God that has put that joy into your heart because He is rejoicing Himself.

RG-y Do you think these thoughts should have some place in our minds at the Supper, and in the service of God. We get a definite lift, a touch of quickening in our own souls, and a sense of rejoicing. Do you think we should look for impressions that come up that cause joy to God's heart? I was thinking of Genesis when God surveyed His creation; it says, “behold it was very good”, Gen 1: 31. That was

rejoicing for His heart, do you think?

NJH Yes, it means everything to God. I think if He comes in and sees a very full expression of what He has done as creating anew; it must cause joy to the heart of God.

RG-y Because we think of our own joy, we constantly have to remind ourselves we should think of what is pleasing to God. If we set out more actively to consider that do you think it would be a help?

NJH I think it would.

In John 15 it says, "If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full". I thought to close with a touch, that it is based on the commandments. The Lord kept His commandments; that is where joy lay for Christ: He was entirely pleasurable to the Father. And we come in: "If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love", and then it says, "your joy be full".

JS I have been thinking of the lines of the hymn writer:

Yet deeper, if a calmer, joy
The Father's love shall raise (Hymn 178).

I was thinking of what it says here about keeping His Father's commandments and abiding in His love. As we are preserved in this order of things, we will be kept in the sense of the Father's love, do you think?

NJH Yes, 'deeper, if a calmer, joy': I like that. Yes, it is kept in His love. "Ye shall abide in my love", He says, "as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love". It shows the moral basis there is for this joy. It shows that if we follow that, we will not lose the joy.

RHB Could you say something as to "my Father's commandments" and then "my commandments"? What does that refer to?

NJH We spoke about being 'in the Lord'. We are to be subject to the Lord; we should keep His commandments. But the Lord keeping the Father's commandments I would think is a wider thought, but I would like help.

RDP There are things in the Lord's life that drew out the Father's love. You quoted the scripture, "On this account my Father loves me, because I lay down my life ...", John 10: 17. And then earlier He speaks

of His Father, does He not? But there seems to be that side of things. He speaks in chapter 5, "Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself save whatever he sees the Father doing: ... for whatever things *he* does, these things also the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son and shews him all things which he himself does", v 18, 19. I wondered about the Father's commandments; perhaps, we think of the commandment as something that is written down, like the ten commandments, but there seems to be something in the manner and life of Jesus, in relation to the Father that drew out the Father's love.

NJH Yes, that would be so. I am glad you referred to that scripture, it was somewhat in mind. He said, "I have received this commandment of my Father", John 10: 18. That was as to laying down His life and to taking it again, and that is why I thought it was wider; it is something to think about.

GAB He said prophetically, "He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear", Isaiah 50: 4. There was something every day that He received from the Father.

NJH In John 11, He waited in the place for two days did He not? That would be in keeping with His Father's commandments. He had not the direction to move. Every move was as subject to the Father.

Dundee

8th April 2012

Key to initials:-

D C Brown, Edinburgh; G A Brown, Grangemouth;
J T Brown, Edinburgh; J A Brown, Grangemouth;
R H Brown, East Finchley; R J Campbell, Glasgow;
J Drummond, Aberdeen; J A Gardiner, Aberdeen; J D Gray, Edinburgh;
J C Gray, Grangemouth; P A Gray, Grangemouth;
R Gray, Grangemouth; G B Grant, Dundee; N J Henry, Glasgow;
R Hodge, Redruth; J B Ikin, Manchester; P Martin, Colchester;
I Purdy, Warrenpoint; R D Plant, Birmingham; Q A Poore, Swanage;
D T Pye, Kirkcaldy; D B Robertson, Cumnock; C K Robinson, Glasgow;
I M Shearer, Adelaide; J Strachan, Dundee; R Taylor, Kirkcaldy;
M C Wood, Dundee; J Wright, Havering

WINGS

Robert C Trotter

Exodus 19: 4

Ruth 2: 12

Psalm 91: 4

There are many references in Scripture to wings. We are well acquainted with the idea. We see birds flying around all day using their wings, but when it refers to God Himself it is quite interesting. It is used here as to the children of Israel and their exit from Egypt, which God brought about Himself. Something that each one of us has to face is our judgment of and exit from Egypt. It says, “Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians”: it must have been a tremendous sight. We get it earlier; they made a song in relation to it, and what they had seen. It is not what they had heard, but what they had seen. That is something else that is very interesting in Scripture, what is seen. We have been given that ability, beloved brethren, to see things. Eyes are very much needed, right eyesight. There was a man, and we remember the Lord had to do with him. His view, his eyesight, was distorted, he saw men as trees walking, everything out of kilter, but the Lord touched him again, Mark 8: 24, 25. He needed a second touch, like ourselves, I suppose. But my simple thought is: “Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians”. The Egyptians had held the children of Israel in bondage, and it is still so today. The Egyptian line of things, the world, it holds people in bondage. The enemy himself, the enemy of our souls has great power and sway over men, holding them in bondage. That is what it was called, “the house of bondage”, Exod 13: 3. But God heard their cry; God delivered them. That is what we have here, the thought of deliverance, something that each one of us has to face. When we are young, Egypt tends to have a great hold upon us, the things of Egypt, the things of the world; not that I would say too much about that, but we are prone as we go through life to the influences of the world. But it says, “Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself”. How touching that is! God was the destination. That is something to be arrived at, to arrive at such a destination as that, but it is what God has done. “I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself”. Anyone who has observed such birds, eagles, at close quarters can discern the power that is in their wings. How much more so when it relates to God and His matters. I was just impressed with that, “borne

you on eagles' wings": not only speed but power. What power, power to bring us to God, to bring us to Himself. Well, that is my simple thought as to this scripture that we might arrive at this, "brought you to myself".

In the book of Ruth, she was bereft, bereft of her husband, but she clung to Naomi. Dear young ones, cling to what Naomi represents. I think she represents something of the local position, what God has placed there for our protection and care. She came to know Boaz, the man of wealth, and there was a tremendous result from it. He says, "Jehovah recompense thy work, and let thy reward be full from Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge". Refuge is a tremendous thing. I was just thinking of a simple expression, that you take someone under your wing, and that has been the salvation of many; not only salvation in relation to souls, but salvation in relation to persons' lives. Some persons go on a line of destruction, destruction of themselves, but there is a Deliverer, Someone comes in and takes care. Well, this would be God Himself again, "Jehovah the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge". What a place of refuge it was for Ruth. She had known the barrenness of things, the loss; then she finds refuge. May each one of us find this. May we come into it. My thoughts are simple as to these things.

I read in Psalm 91, "He shall cover thee with his feathers". I think there is a lot of meaning in it, and I just leave it with the brethren to think over. "He shall cover thee with his feathers", the psalmist says. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find refuge". It is the thought of refuge again. I am sure there is a lot of meaning in these things, beloved brethren. Maybe we should seek further into them and try to find it out, "He shall cover thee with his feathers". I remember being told a story. I think it was in Australia, where there was a hen and there was a fire, and the hen got burned, but underneath her feathers were the live chickens. That is very touching; they were protected. Beloved brethren, the local assembly is a place of protection; I feel that. Maybe this applies to someone here, I do not know. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou find refuge: his truth is a shield and buckler". There is something that protects - a shield is part of the armour.

Well, I only leave these simple thoughts with the brethren. Deliverance is a great matter, especially from Egypt, and how we need it! "I have borne you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself". May

we enjoy that! It is a position to be enjoyed, is it not, and a place of God's blessing? May we know it for His Name's sake!

Edinburgh

25th December 2012

“THE INHERITANCE OF MY FATHERS”

David C Brown

1 Kings 21: 1-4, “my fathers”

I would seek to encourage us all in the valuing of the inheritance of our fathers. We have a very great inheritance, and particularly as having part in the recovery of the truth. I do not take it away from being the inheritance of everyone: any believer can enter into the privileges and blessings but, through grace, you and I have a part in the recovery of the truth, a recovery which approaches two hundred years old. There is an inheritance, something that was secured: something has been secured. It was all, of course, in the Scriptures; we do not take away from that. It was there throughout the dispensation, and persons perhaps did have enjoyment of it in degree, but there is something that has been distinctly brought out by God in the recovery of the truth, and I trust that we appreciate that and the privilege of it, and are prepared not to give it up, even if, as in Naboth's case, it is at the cost of our lives.

There are various ways in which we can think of the fathers. Most of us here have had the benefit of a natural father who had part in that recovery, which is a privilege and a benefit, but it does not in itself confer anything upon us. Any who take their part in the recovery of the truth can look back to persons in an earlier period who were fathers, whose ministry in the recovery we are to value as part of our inheritance and heritage, and not to give up. I think, too, of persons who have carried that testimony forward even in this city, and even up to our beloved brother whom the Lord has just taken. He was someone who came into the inheritance, into the recovery, and carried it forward. The inheritance that we have is in part something that is carried forward from our beloved brother.

But I was thinking back to the way in which God came in and secured something distinctive in the recovery of the truth. It began with a clergyman who, it is said, woke one morning and said, 'I have a Head in heaven' (JBS vol 6 p62); and that had to be worked out in his soul and in his practice. Now, do you value the fact that you have a Head in heaven? Do you value the fact that that light has come to you, and distinctly to those who have part in the recovery? Because of that impression, he found, among other things, that he had to acknowledge that he could no longer be a clergyman: if there was a Head in heaven, he had not to get in the way of the way in which the light and the truth came from the Head to the body. So he found, because of that, that he

had to separate from what was publicly claiming to belong to Christ, that separating meant that he had in exercise to come together with others in simplicity to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, and that the only ground that was a true ground of gathering was not denominational but the one body, JND vol 33 p31. Do you value that truth? Do you value the fact that there is one body. I do not, of course, detract from the fact that every believer who has the Spirit belongs to that one body, but not all walk as practically having part in it, not all have their enjoyment of it. To have our part and enjoyment of it requires that there should be that way, that way that he took, the way of separation from what was in the public church surrounding him, and this is part of our inheritance. I present it to you in this way as an inheritance we have, the light and the truth and the enjoyment of it, and it is worked out practically in different ways. And the very fact that someone had taken such ground meant that fresh light came in, and through grace fresh light has continued to come in.

One of the things that came in, and came in very soon, was an appreciation of the fact that the Lord Jesus was going to come to take us away at the rapture - that was a truth which had been lost largely to Christendom, to believers. There were faithful persons, and we do not detract from their faithfulness, but they did not appreciate the fact that the Lord Jesus was going to come for them. They were looking for improvement in this scene, and that light came and has been valued ever since, but do *you* continue to value the truth, the light of the rapture, as part of your inheritance? Light came in. Do not give it up, and have it constantly before you day by day.

There are matters that worked out practically and, simply, if the body was to operate there was the liberty of the Spirit. So even things that we are used to, such as gathering together for a reading of the Scriptures, to speak over them, each one at liberty in the Spirit's control to contribute, is part of our heritage and our inheritance, and something to be valued. This was freshly brought to my attention in being among the brethren in India. I asked, 'What attracted you?' and several times the reading of the Scriptures was mentioned. It was ordinary to me, it was everyday to me; but we should realise it is something distinctive, that this is the body operating in the reading of the Scriptures. Value that inheritance and do not give it up.

There was other light, and blessedly we had help with it on Lord's day about the reality and the truth of the Lord's sonship. The

view in Christendom was taken from what was written, not in the Scriptures, but in the creeds, early in the history of church, but, through grace, we have been brought back to value the fact that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God as Man, as coming into manhood. That is rejected, this truth is despised very close to us among believers, those who have some of the same history as we have. Do you value the fact that you are one who has the privilege of understanding that we cannot speak of the Lord Jesus as Son in eternity past? Divine relationships subsisting then are not revealed and beyond human comprehension; but He has come into that relationship in which He speaks of His Father as greater than He. His dignity in sonship is enhanced in that, and His dignity in His Person is enhanced to us in that; He cannot in any sense be thought of in any way less than having the same glory as the One we know as Father before the world was founded. He has taken the place of sonship. That magnifies His grace to us, and that is a light and a truth which we have as a privilege, and it is part of our inheritance in the recovery in which we have part.

Another matter that has developed as part of our inheritance is the order of the service of God, and that was worked out, it was worked out over years, and it is a great privilege. You gather together, and again persons who come in say that this is something different, and wonderful to them. They come and see that there is an assembling to break bread. Do you value that? You come together, you do not have a sermon first, and you do not have anything else. You do not have a series of hymns working up to something; you come together and you remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread. That is the whole initial objective before you.

And then, through grace, there has been an opening up, particularly by the Lord as the Minister of the holy places, it has been suggested, of an order in the service. It is not a rigid repetitive order, but there is what is under His control, what is under His headship and leadership, so that there should be something for His own glory and pleasure, so that the Spirit of God should have His part in worship, and so that there should be an expansion in the worship of the Father.

Well, these things are not to be given up, they are to be valued as our inheritance: they are to be valued. Naboth said, 'I am not going to leave, I am not going to abandon my inheritance'. Do you value the inheritance you have, that it is a special and distinct privilege that you have as having part in the recovery, through the sovereignty of God? It is not through anything of your own doing, but through His sovereignty.

It is something to be clung to, something to be helped in, and something to be cherished, as has been brought before us, in the local assembly.

That is another important thing, that the local assembly has its distinctive place; yet not independent of what there is universally. There should be the respect for the universal fellowship; yet everything is worked out in local assemblies, which needs divine skill and divine help. That is something which has come in, and been helped, in the recovery of the truth.

May we value all of these things and be prepared to stand for them, not to give them up, and to see them for the privileges that they are. May the Lord bless the word. For His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

25th December 2012

CARE IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY

David H Marshall

Luke 10: 34

I want to say something in relation to what our two brothers have brought before us as to the local assembly being a place where care is administered. It is an attractive thought that there is a place where this man could be taken to. We know the story well, it is often preached from, Luke 10; it is known as the story of the Good Samaritan. We know that when the man was in a helpless state he was met, in figure, by the Lord Jesus, when only a transaction with Christ would resolve the matter of his immediate need. That was done there and then on the Jericho road, as we often say in the glad tidings. However his ongoing well-being was a matter of concern, and that is why he was taken to the inn. Often we speak of the Good Samaritan as being typical of the Lord Jesus, we speak of the innkeeper as being typical of the Holy Spirit, and I would endorse all of that; but there is this attractive thought that there was somewhere the Samaritan would take him to, and I think that relates to what we have in the local assembly. It is a place; it is something that is quite tangible. It is not just an idea, it is not a concept, it is set out here as the inn: somewhere where care could be administered, somewhere where divine Persons were free. The man who typifies the Lord Jesus had taken him to this very place. The local assembly is somewhere where the inheritance that our brother has spoken of is valued, is treasured; it is important: it is an area of safety. This man needed an area of safety and he was taken to an area of safety but, much more than that, it was an area for his spiritual development. That should be so in our local assemblies.

The local assembly is generally where young people come to know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. That is a great cause for encouragement and rejoicing, but there is more than that. They come to break bread, and again that is a great cause for encouragement. They have the gift of the Holy Spirit given to them by the Father if they receive it. And where does all this take place? Well, it normally takes place in the local assembly, where we remember the Lord Jesus. Yes, it is in a place - we break bread here in Loanhead, we break bread in Port Seton, in a local assembly that is set in a place. The thought that is set out here is the provision of care, and I would just like to say something briefly as to the wideness of that thought. The immediate care was dispensed on the Jericho road, but there is still that very

attractive thought that ongoing care is required. I think that we all need that. Everyone of us needs ongoing care. It is rather obvious that this man would need ongoing care. Healing would be required. Immediate things had taken place on the Jericho road, but healing would be required. There would be his building up needed, but there is even more than that alluded to here. There is the thought that he was going to remain there in this area of care and safety until the Lord Jesus returns, and I think it bears application that there is an area, an environment, that is safe for the believer and is safe for the believer's development, spiritual development, spiritual growth, appreciation of the inheritance. Even Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9, when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, was taken to a place. He was taken to a local assembly where the inheritance was valued and appreciated. He was taken there to people who loved the Lord Jesus and, as a consequence, loved one another, were found gathering together where the truth was held and held precious, and he was placed in that environment, an environment of care. Care in the fullest sense is administered here, care with a view to spiritual growth continuing. We will not grow in eternity but we can grow here, and there is an opportunity for all of us to treasure the local assembly and be part of that system that can administer care when and where it is needed. It is needed in many different ways - by persons turning aside, by persons coming amongst us, and in the normality of growth, especially amongst the younger people. All that can be done to nurture that and to encourage it can be found in the local assembly. Our brother has spoken about being taken under the wing. These are touching things but they are real things administered affectionately by people who have your care at heart, affection for the Lord Jesus and affection for one another, and desire spiritual growth, and the preciousness of what you have come into to mean more and more to you. This is administered largely in the local assembly. I do not say that to detract from what is done individually, but again what is done individually largely flows out from the local assembly.

So we have this attractive touch here that this man is taken to a place of safety and care where everything was there for his needs. He did not need again to leave that environment. Now we know that we find ourselves in the world whether we have to work or whatever, but the thought that is conveyed is that he never needed to find his life on the Jericho road again: he finds his life in the inn, speaking of the area where the Lord Jesus is treasured, where the Holy Spirit is in operation

as well as indwelling believers. It is the place where, for example, these believers are found together for the simple but profound matter of reading the Scriptures. How much help comes into our gatherings when we open the Scriptures! You must notice that. Sometimes we are very small, and we wonder what is going to be said, what value is going to come out of an occasion. However you never leave without some fresh touch coming into these occasions, and that is in operation in reality among us. It is caring in the fullest sense, it is care with a view to having some increased appreciation of what is precious to the Lord Jesus. The place where this is seen functioning is the local assembly. These things are not just ideas or texts on the wall; they are seen in operation. These matters that we spoke about, this place, the inn, all these things, these practical things, would actually take place. This man's spiritual well-being would be catered for in the fullest sense, and that is a very attractive thought. It is something that is possible; it is something that is achievable. It is achievable through the help of divine Persons and, in particular, the help of the Holy Spirit operating in this area. This environment that we should treasure and value, is closely linked to our inheritance: an area where our inheritance is treasured. We have this lovely thought that this man was not left to his own devices, he was taken to a place where spiritual care could be administered. It is a challenge to us all, because these things involve us being engaged in what is precious to the Lord Jesus in a place, and that place is the local assembly. We can all find our place there and there is something for everyone of us to do with a view to furthering the Lord's interests here. May He bless the word for His Name's sake!

Edinburgh

25th December 2012

“AS HE IS, WE ALSO ARE”

Tim D Ellis

Colossians 1: 12-14; 2: 20; 3: 1-4

1 John 3: 1-3; 4: 16-18 “casts out fear”

This last scripture that we read in John's epistle came to mind yesterday in the prayer meeting in the light of the hymn that we sang at the beginning in relation to the Lord Jesus:

O what amazing grace
To know Thee here below! (Hymn 228)

I was just reflecting, too, on what we had in the reading on Lord's day as to the sovereign operations of God, and the fact that “he who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ's day”, Phil 1: 6. It is a great thing to understand this scripture in 1 John 4: 17, “that even as *he is*, *we also are* in this world”. “As *he is*” - that is in the place where Jesus is now, the place that He is in glory. “Even as *he is*, *we also are*” - not ‘we also will be’, although that is true, but “*we also are* in this world”. It is a profound thought and worth contemplation.

I was thinking a little bit about that and these other scriptures came to mind. I think it is important to start with something such as we read in the beginning of Colossians because this is all from the divine side. It has all been the sovereign operations of God, and we have to give thanks to the Father for that, the One “who has made us fit”, the One who has provided the source of redemption, the forgiveness of sins. O what amazing grace that we should be given these things: to have redemption, to have the forgiveness of sins, something that is the starting point for us in our Christian journeys, and we are to give “thanks to the Father who has made us fit”. We sang about that in our hymn this evening too (Hymn 78): each of us made meet, made fit, made suitable, yet training. So we have been made fit; that is from the divine side. We have been given the fitness, the suitability to share the portion of the saints in light, to be delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into another scene, “the kingdom of the Son of his love”. We are made fit for that. But we are also still training, and I suppose that is really what comes out in these other scriptures in Colossians.

If we have died with Christ, there are certain things that we are not to subject ourselves to. There is, as we were speaking about in the reading, the heavenly realm, the spiritual realm that God would have us come into through the operations of the Spirit. So when we come to

chapter 3 it says, "If therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above, where the Christ is". As we think about Nicodemus and others coming to the Lord Jesus when He was here on earth, they could come and they could have sat at His feet, whether they came in the daylight or in the darkness. They could come to Him and learn from Him. But in our day we know what it is not only to have "died with Christ from the elements of the world", but also to be raised with Him and to know Him in His present place, "where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God". What a great thing it is to know the Lord Jesus in glory! And there are consequences from that. We are to have our "mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth". I feel deeply challenged by that because what we revert to when we are not occupied with legitimate things (I speak for myself) are seldom the things that are above; it is very often the things that are on the earth, but the exhortation is to have our mind on the things that are above. I have been very touched recently by the scripture in Philippians, "For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if any praise, think on these things", Phil 4: 8. These are not the things that are noble or just or pure according to human estimation, but according to divine estimation. They are "the things which are above, where the Christ is". And why should we have our minds on these things? Because "ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God". I remember many years ago Mr Bert Taylor giving an address in a three day meeting in Park Street and reading this verse 4, "When the Christ is manifested, who is our life", and stopping and saying, 'Well, is He?'. Now that is a question to all of us, a question to me: is Christ my life? It would link, I think, to what we have already had this evening as to walking worthily. We know what it is, even in this scene down here, to have One who is our life who is now in glory. When He is manifested we shall also be manifested with Him, and not only that, blessed and glorious thought as it is, but we shall be manifested with Him in glory.

That is why I read in John's epistle because we do not know what that will be, "what we shall be has not yet been manifested". We *are* children of God; we know that. We had that reference in the reading on Lord's day that we are children of God, "who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God", John 1: 13. We are given that place as children *now*. "Beloved, now are we children of God". We have that already. It has been established from God's side

He has given us that place as children of God, but “what we shall be has not yet been manifested”. We do not know what we will be like in a day to come except that, “we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him”: we shall be like Jesus. And how do we know that? “For we shall see him as he is”; not as He was here, not as a Man in flesh and blood, to many just a Jewish teacher in Israel, not here as a Man of sorrows, but we shall see Him as He is, as He is in glory, as He is out of death, as He is at the right hand of God, as He is crowned in all His glory and honour. We shall see Him as He is. That is His desire. He has asked the Father for that. In His prayer in John 17 He desired that, and if that is the case, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”. And as a consequence of that we have to purify ourselves: “And every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as *he* is pure”. So we may be made meet, yet we are training, being prepared for that place above. And then, as I say, in chapter 4 we have the blessed realisation that all this is the result of love, the result of love being perfected. “Herein has love been perfected with us that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that even as *he* is, we also are in this world”. Mr Darby says very affectingly in relation to the day of judgment that we shall be as the Judge, Synopsis vol 5 p348. He is our righteousness. How can we have any fear? “Perfect love casts out fear” because “even as *he* is, we also are ...”. What a thought that is, and we can have that assurance as to the future, but we have it also for what we are now, “even as *he* is, we also are in this world”. So, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear”. Everything that is extraneous, everything that might torment us, is placed on one side. There is no fear in love. Love is perfected; it is perfected with us. And why? Because “God is love, and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him”. What a promise that is! What a reality that is! What a spiritual, heavenly reality! And it is something we can know now! While I feel how far short of the realisation of these things I come, and I am sure others would feel the same, what a blessed thing it is to know that even as the Lord Jesus is in glory at the present time, so also we are in this world.

May we be encouraged by these things! For the Lord's Name's sake.

Edinburgh

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