

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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GOD'S SPEAKING

Hebrews 1: 1-4

John 1: 18; 17: 6-8, 26

RFW I suggest that we might speak a little of the wonderful fact that *God* has spoken to us. This may be very basic, and yet there is nothing to me more important than to lay hold of the greatness of the fact that God Himself, the mighty God, has spoken to us. We know that there is much speaking of men in these days, and indeed, much speaking of men against God, and these things may tend to affect us, but I feel impressed just to speak a little of the greatness of the fact that God has spoken to us. Hebrew says He “has spoken to us in ... Son” (Heb 1: 2), which, as we know, involves the Lord Jesus Christ personally and the greatness of His Person. There is nothing, dear brethren and dear younger ones, more important to lay hold of than this, that God has spoken to us in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I wonder if it has really laid hold on me, that God has spoken to me in this way.

In John 1 where we read, it says “No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him”. Whether anybody receives it or not, God has been declared. Then in John 17 there are those there who have received what has been said by this blessed Person and they are brought into the secrets of the Father's affections for the Son. I trust that we may see that we have, through grace, been brought into some knowledge of those blessed affections. We have been brought, as it were, into the inside place to see that everything has been in accord with the divine purpose from all eternity, and that is to bring confirmation and stability into our souls.

I thought that we might start with Hebrews where we read and simply impress our spirits with the greatness of the fact that God has spoken to us.

RG-y I am sure that will be instructive for us. Do you think the fact that in Revelation the Lord speaks about the Spirit speaking would suggest that God speaks continuously in this dispensation?

RFW Yes, I believe it does. There has been the distinctive speaking that was referred to in Hebrews 1, God speaking “in ... Son”, which involved the incarnation in all its wonder. How could we describe the greatness and wonder of the incarnation, that God should be here in

the person of the Son and that He should be making God known? The speaking goes on in the Spirit's day, and I suppose it always has the character of divine speaking.

TCM Would the particular distinctive speaking, speaking "in ... Son" be over against what was before - which would be nothing wrong; but there would be something distinctive and special in the way that God is speaking now?

RFW Yes. If God speaks "in ... Son" the Speaker is One who is perfectly able to bring out the fulness of the truth in all its perfection. A prophet could give what was partial, I suppose, or give what was given him to say, but God speaking "in ... Son" involves that the fulness of the knowledge of God has come to us and it could be expressed in no better way. It has often been pointed out that there is no speaker after the Son. We know that other religious movements have taken place on the earth subsequent to the Lord Jesus being here, but once God has spoken "in ... Son" everything for God must derive only from His speaking.

NJH There would be a difference between speaking in the Son and speaking by the Son, is that right?

RFW Well, you have something in mind.

NJH By the Son would be instrumental. It is more than that.

RFW It is more than that, because of the greatness of the One who was here. It is God speaking 'Sonwise', as we have been taught, JT vol 29 p364. I think it should impress our spirits that God has spoken in this wonderful Person and that is to affect our lives in a real way, is it not?

JDG Speaking "in ... Son" involves humanity. It is not exactly as it was in the old dispensation. The Lord came into humanity in the Person of the Son.

RFW It is a wonderful thing that He came in that way amongst men. So that creature, man, has been distinctly favoured by God. He is speaking to men, is He not, in the Person of the Son?

JDG How near He came and what dignity was there. It is not the lowly side; it is a dignified matter.

RFW Exactly. Hebrews brings out His greatness, in this first chapter especially, the greatness of the Speaker, and you find as you go on in the book that the greatness of Christ is constantly emphasised. He is

greater than Moses, and He is greater than Aaron. He is greater even than Abraham, so there could be no one greater than this.

RT Speaking “in ... Son”, is the authority maintained; yet there is One who displays the speaking.

RFW What had you in mind in the display?

RT There is authority first of all; that is not diminished. In the prophets there was not the same authority, was there? The authority is maintained, but there is One now who exemplifies the speaking entirely, is there not?

RFW Yes, indeed. Take the prophet Jeremiah, for example. Jeremiah was given many things to say but you see his own deep feelings and his own sense of weakness too, especially in relation to what was laid upon him to say at certain times; but there is nothing of that with respect to the Son, is there? There is the fulness of authority in setting out the mind of God and then there was the demonstration, too, of what God is.

JSp “The effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance” would be reflected in the speaking, would it not?

RFW Yes, quite so. So as here amongst men, He was everything that God ever desired in a man, was He not? But then, there was the perfect expression manward of all that God was in that blessed Person, “the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”; so nothing more can be known of God than was brought out and demonstrated in the Son here.

CKR God speaking in the Person of the Son must reflect that He has so much of great value to say; therefore the substance of what is going to come forth is going to be particularly personified in the One through whom the speaking is going to come.

RFW Yes, that is good, because there is nothing greater for us than the truth that has come out in Christ. There may have been other religious movements in the history of this world, but God speaking “in ... Son” means that because of the distinctiveness of the truth that has come to us in a blessed Man, there could not possibly be anything greater or more important, do you think?

CKR I was thinking of the greatness of God's purpose, and this is the

way that He would use to bring us particularly the substance of His purpose in speaking in a blessed Man who Himself remains a divine Person.

RFW I think John 17 touches on that, because what you have there is really what is in the purpose of God in the reference to “the men whom thou gavest me”. There were those who received the speaking, and that is a very blessed thing, and I trust we are amongst them.

WL Mr Darby helpfully points out it is God Himself who speaks, 'not another', footnote *i*.

RFW Exactly. Is the greatness of this not something to lay hold of our spirits? It just impressed me in view of this meeting, the greatness of this fact that God, none other, has spoken to us, and is still speaking as we have been reminded.

GBG Is it the gospels therefore we turn to for God speaking “in ... Son”? I would like help as to it.

RFW Yes, I think so. I was reading that there used to be a hymn that said

Thy death has brought to light the Father's heart

- but it was pointed out that God was fully declared and the Father was made known in the Lord Jesus here in manhood. What do you think?

GBG The Father was fully revealed in the Lord in manhood. God in His love was fully expressed in Christ's death. Is that right?

RFW Yes, I am sure that is so.

RG The Lord said to the man in John 9, “Thou, dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? And Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaks **with** thee is he. And he said, I believe, Lord: and he did him homage”, v 35-38. Do you think it is interesting that it does not say, 'He that speaks **to** thee'? There was something there suggestive of a holy conversation but at the same time the greatness of all the mind of God was being portrayed in the Son, do you think?

RFW And do you think what the Lord was saying was to be intelligible to the man in that way, “he that speaks with thee”? He would take that man on and He would take us on; and He would make known to us the

fulness of the heart of God, would He not? What do you say?

RG I was thinking how God has been made known publicly in a certain sense as He has spoken to the world, you might say, generally. He has spoken to them in the Son, but then there is something greater, is there not, for Him to be able to speak with persons who would be in line with the mind of heaven?

RFW Yes; I think what the Lord says in John 17 touches on that. He says, “for the words which thou hast given me I have given them, and they have received them”. There were those who received His words. The declaration that we have in John 1 was general, was it not? Whether any received it or not, God has been declared. But how blessed it was that there were those who received the word and to whom the Father's name was manifested in that blessed Person.

JTB In the tabernacle system the mercy-seat was necessary to enable God from above the mercy-seat to speak to Moses but it could never reveal or express the heart of God, Num 7: 89. Do you think God speaking “in ... Son” entails the present dispensation?

RFW Yes. I suppose that is another type too of the way in which there has been divine speaking. Blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat; so I take it that, for us, that speaking would relate to what had been secured for God in the death of Christ. But how great a matter it is that there was a blessed Man here who was no less than God and He was here to make God known, and there could be nothing more blessed or glorious than that.

JS Do you think the Father would commend this kind of speaking when He says on the mount, “*This* is my beloved Son: hear him”, Mark 9: 7?

RFW Yes indeed. What a moment that was, and there were those who were with Him on the holy mountain. You might say it was one side of the thing for the Father to say, “*This* is my beloved Son: hear him”, but then Peter says, “and this voice we heard”, 2 Pet 1: 18. It was important for God that there should be those that heard. I suppose the teaching of the gospel of John shows us that the Father so worked that there would be those who would receive Christ, receive His words, who would hear. How thankful we are for that side of things, that God works that there are those who hear and who are able to appreciate something of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Speaker.

What would you say?

JS I was just impressed that there were those who were present and heard Him, and we can see how they enjoyed and profited by such speaking.

RFW I think sometimes in our gatherings, perhaps in the morning meeting, the service of God, there is something of that, is there not? We might have an impression of the Father saying to us, “*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight”, Matt 17: 5.

JAG Could you say something about God being pleased to reveal His Son in Paul, Gal 1: 16?

RFW I was thinking of that scripture too. What is your thought as to it?

JAG It must involve character and quite intense intimacy. What God has to say must be very, very important because of the way that He took up Paul and revealed His Son in him that Paul might announce Him as glad tidings among the nations.

RFW Yes; it brings up another line of things, that there has been speaking through vessels such as Paul to bring out what was in the mind of God. I wondered about that because we say that there can be no speaker after the Son, but then Paul speaks about himself as completing the word of God (Col 1: 25), does he not? What would you say as to that?

JAG I cannot say much except, of course, that it is the completion of the mystery, the finality in the opening up of the purpose of God; but God revealing His Son in the person is something very precious.

RFW Yes, indeed. It must involve the place that He had in Paul's affections in a distinctive way. Think of the blessedness of that. Some would say, 'Well, we are not listening to Paul these days because it is only Paul that says this', but God took him up and was pleased to reveal his Son in him, that he might announce Him as glad tidings. You cannot set that aside in any way, can you?

DCB I wondered if the speaking from “the right hand of the greatness on high” is something that comes out in the character of Paul's ministry. “For I received from the Lord” (1 Cor. 11: 23), he could say: he had only known this glorious Person as a glorified Person. He “set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high”.

RFW You mean that the speaking through Paul was from the Lord in His present, glorious position. I suppose, also, when the Lord was here, all His speaking bore the moral character of heavenly speaking, did it not? It was the mind of God, heavenly truth brought out in that blessed Man. Do you have more in mind?

DCB Only that we should appreciate the fulness of what we have is from an ascended and glorified Man, and this epistle emphasises that He is there “on the right hand of the greatness on high”.

RFW Quite so. Well, our link is with Him there, is it not? Paul was brought into touch with the glorified Christ. It was the starting point of his life as a believer, the contact with the Man who had gone up. I suppose that is our beginning characteristically. We are brought into contact now with the One who is in heaven. Others have said that when the gospel writers were writing the gospels they would say to themselves as they wrote, ‘the One about whom I am writing is now “on the right hand of the greatness on high”’. He was once here amongst men in that blessed pathway of His. He is now in heaven at the right hand of God. Peter says of Him, “who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to him”, 1 Pet 3: 22. Peter was with Him here and could speak to Him, and He could speak to Peter, but now he says, He has “gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to him”.

JAB Would there be some significance that the last public speaking of the Lord Jesus was on the cross? We have already referred to His death, but in two short sentences there He encapsulates so much in what He says. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23: 34): that is the spirit of the gospel. And then, “Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit”, v 46. As a result of listening to that, the centurion got an impression of who was there. Is there exercise that we might get an impression of who is speaking and be affected by it as that centurion was?

RFW It is very affecting indeed to think of that. So it is not only what was said but the way in which it was said, and the One who said it. Who else could have spoken in such a way at that time? Those final words encapsulated what came out in that pathway of grace.

JDG “Being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance”: that must have come out in some way in the speaking. It is a means of conveying it to them.

RFW “Who being the effulgence of his glory and the expression of his substance” - those with Him must have had some impression of the greatness of the speaking. So He had the title “the Word” when He was amongst them. It is a remarkable title, is it not, involving that everything He said was utterly reliable and the way He said it was perfect?

JDG It was definitely something that registered with the disciples, “the Word”.

JSp The two on the way to Emmaus were impressed with the speaking. They say, “Was not our heart burning in us ...?”, Luke 24: 32.

RFW You are impressed in reading that scripture with the gracious way that He drew near to them. He went with them and heard them discoursing and He entered into a conversation with them. It is wonderful to think that One who had been into death and had come out of it again in the way that the Lord Jesus did would spend that time with two people and graciously speak to them to restore them.

CKR Your exercise is that God has spoken to us; so we have a company of believers here and God will have spoken to each one, spoken “in ... Son”, and reached their affections. There are those in Scripture like “Saul, Saul” who are examples of individuals to whom God has spoken “in ... Son”, knowing them by name, reflecting His love, reflecting His interest in them, reflecting His purpose for them and for each one of us.

RFW That is what was on my heart really, and I am thankful you bring it in. Is there something in my life that reflects the fact that God has spoken to me in this way? Has the greatness of the speaking come home to me, and the greatness of the One who has spoken to me?

CKR You think of the Lord saying, “Martha, Martha”, “Simon, Simon”, “Saul, Saul”. There are others but these souls would never ever forget these words, and what was said, and Who was speaking to them. It must remain with them because it is the divine word.

RFW So He knows our names, does He not? He would draw near to us and speak to us, and yet He would impress upon us that it is God who is speaking to us.

JAG Would “the effulgence of his glory” bear upon the moral greatness that comes out in the gospel, and “the expression of his substance” how He could heal people and do things without any

diminution in His resource, or is it more than that?

RFW Well, I think that must fully enter into it. As you say, “the expression of his substance”, conveys something of the way that there was infinite resource there to meet everything that came up. The Lord always had the right word for the time and for the person.

JAG He always leaves something with you of “his substance” and then it is to become your substance.

RG-y In the beginning in Genesis 1 there was what was formative. Is it your thought that this speaking also is formative and has something special in view?

RFW Yes. Do you think there could not be a divine speaking of God without there being a result? It could not have been possible that a divine Person could have come here in the way that the Lord Jesus did without there being a result from it. On our side we are challenged as to what the result has been with us, do you think?

RG-y Could you say a little more, then, about what has been referred to once or twice about this reference to “us”, that is, there were those who could hear and could appreciate what was being said?

RFW Well, in the beginning of chapter 2 of Hebrews it speaks of the “us”, “has been confirmed to us by those who have heard”, v 3. There were those who had heard, were there not? What do you think?

RG-y I was thinking of the Lord's words when He was here. He says, “My Father worketh hitherto and I work”, John 5: 17. Did that have in view the preparation of suitable material that would take on this speaking?

RFW It is an astounding thing that the Lord Jesus was here doing the things that He did, and speaking in the way that has been referred to, and yet the great mass were unaffected by it. Yet there were those who heard, and that relates to divine purpose, the way in which God was working. The Lord refers in John 17 where we read as to “the men whom thou gavest me out of the world”. There was a divine operation proceeding, behind all the public side of things, that there might be those who received His words.

JS “By whom also he made the worlds”. He could speak there, He could command, and the thing happened. Do you think in regard to

ourselves in this dispensation we should take heed more abundantly to the things we have heard?

RFW Yes, I think that would be my exercise really because of the greatness of the One who said them to us. It is a remarkable statement, “by whom also he made the worlds”. He spoke and it was done; the divine word called into being the whole universe and His word of power upholds all things, and yet He was here amongst men speaking; and not everybody heard His word and not everybody was responsive to it. But the greatness of the fact was that the Father worked, so there were persons who heard and they were drawn to Him, and He could manifest the Father's name to them and they could receive divine communications. It is very blessed to think of it and I trust that we find through grace our part in that company that have received Him in that way.

ARH Paul, when he addresses the Corinthians at the beginning, speaks about “called saints”; the note says, 'Saints by divine calling', 1 Cor 1: 2. Does that fit in with what you are saying about “the men whom thou gavest me”?

RFW Yes, as I understand it, the thought of “the men whom thou gavest me” relates to divine purpose. But then in time, as you say, God has called us. At the start of the epistle to the Romans Paul refers to the saints in Rome as “the called of Jesus Christ” (Rom 1: 6), and it is on that line that Jesus Christ Himself has called us. He has known our names, as we have been saying; He has drawn near to us and He has called us into this great area of blessing as proceeding from God Himself. Then in Corinthians, they are addressed as “called saints”. So you look at your local brethren as those whom God has called, do you not? They have been distinguished in that way, and not only have they been called but they have answered to the call and they have received the Lord Jesus Christ in faith.

GBG The Lord says, “He that believes on me, the works which I do shall he do also, and he shall do greater than these, because I go to the Father” (John 14: 12), but was there not always something distinctive in what the Lord did?

RFW Yes, I am sure that is right. When the Spirit came, the works may have been greater in extent in a way; for example, on the day of Pentecost there were thousands that were converted. There was nothing just like that in the Lord's lifetime that we read of, but the works

would not be greater in quality, or greater in moral greatness than what the Lord Jesus did as Man here, do you think? So we can think of the way in which things have spread in the whole dispensation, what has come out of this divine speaking and the greatness of what has been secured in the Spirit's day, and we can rejoice in it, can we not?

WL The Lord seems to state two things, “for the words which thou hast given me I have given them”; then, “they have received them”.

RFW “They have received them” is our side of it, is it not? The Lord is speaking, as I understand it, in John 17 from His own standpoint, in appreciation of the men the Father had given Him, and they had received His words. The Lord is entitled to speak about His own from His own standpoint in the light of what the Father has done. “They have received them” is, you might say, the basis of the building up of the truth of the assembly.

WL It has come down to us. It speaks further on about “those who believe on me through their word”, v 20. Things have come down to us in a very real way from that standpoint.

RFW Yes, quite so. Things have come down to us from those who have received them directly from the Lord Jesus in that way, and this truth is very precious to us. I trust we do feel that way about what has come to us. It is what is divine in origin and has come to us in the way the Lord Jesus has designed and the Holy Spirit has maintained, and therefore we have been brought into a blessed system of things that has its origin in God Himself. It is a very wonderful thing, is it not?

TDB Samuel was a young boy, and was not sure who was speaking to him. I was just thinking that communication links with speaking, does it not?

RFW He finally said, “Speak, for thy servant heareth”, 1 Sam 3: 10. The priest had enough wisdom to send him back to wait for the divine communication. I think if God is going to speak to us, He will maybe speak to us again until our ears are opened to listen. I suppose most of us know that there have been speakings that we have ignored, and yet in grace God would speak to us again that we might hear Him. Is this not very important for every one of us, that God is speaking to *me*? He has in grace considered for such an insignificant person as myself, and He has spoken to me. Is it not one of the most wonderful things you could think about? And the effect of His speaking is to draw me to

Christ, to draw me to His blessed Son that He might be the Centre of my life.

RG Blest Lord, Thou spakest! 'twas Thy voice
 That led my heart to Thee. Hymn 47

That was an individual hymn originally, and it should be an individual experience.

RFW Quite so. It is not forced and it is not artificial but some element has entered into our lives that is of the character of divine speaking, and it is intended to have a permanent and lasting effect because it is from God.

CKR If we do not have that, have we got anything?

RFW Well, there is nothing substantial really. You could be carried away by all the ungodly speaking of men, and all the great variety of communications that are so rife at the present time, but carried away into a lost eternity.

DAS The Lord said of Mary, after she had taken her place at His feet listening to His word, "Mary has chosen the good part, the which shall not be taken from her", Luke 10: 42. I am just wondering about what you said as to hearing - listening and hearing, so that there will be a result. God will leave the word with us in view of this result, will He not?

RFW Quite so, He will, and then as you reflect you understand through grace that God works sovereignly from His own side to make it possible for you to hear. And that is the effect of new birth, that He works from His own side that I might be amenable to His word, that it might come into my soul and that I might know through grace that God has been speaking to me.

RG-y Would that make the gatherings of the saints very important? We have dwelt on the individual side, which is right, but to hear God speaking is a wonderful thing, and He has arranged circumstances which are propitious to His speaking.

RFW Yes. It would be so in a gathering such as this, would it not? Things are propitious, there is an area in which persons love Him and love to hear Him speaking and hear Him spoken about, and that is extremely favourable.

AMB In relation to what has been said, the matter of communication

that was referred to is very important, is it not? It is very attractive too - just to speak simply - that God should take the trouble to communicate with us; and He expects there to be a response to that communication. That is His mind, is it?

RFW Yes indeed, and those communications are not mystical. They bring us back to the Scriptures, do they not? We are not speaking about mystical visions and that sort of thing; we are speaking about what has come to us in the Word of God and that has its basis in the Scriptures for us. So that everything is to be regulated by His word.

AMB What you say is very important. Do you not think, too, that in John 17: 8 the Lord takes account of the results of divine communication worked out in His disciples because He says, “the words which thou hast given me I have given them, and they have received them, and have known truly that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou sentest me”? The Lord took account of the effect of divine communication in His own, and you can see that in verse 30 of the previous chapter.

RFW He adds that word “truly” in verse 8, “have known truly that I came out from thee”; so everything is firmly established. So there was the speaking, divine communications, and the Father had, you might say, gone before that there might be those who would receive it.

NJH Is the Son speaking to the Father here at the beginning of the chapter? He says, “and now glorify *me*, *thou* Father, along with thyself” v 5. That position is shared by none other. It is His alone, but then later in the chapter there is a glory which is shared and which we participate in under God, v 22.

RFW The Lord is going over things here with His Father, and there is a note of joy and triumph as He speaks, that there is this result from His work. There are those to whom He manifested the Father's name. He says, “I have manifested thy name”, and there were those who received those divine communications and they are brought into this glorious new relationship, into sonship itself. I sometimes think that we go over these things often and yet the glory and blessedness of them is almost beyond human mind to grasp. There was One here who was fully able to set out the glory of the relationship in all its blessedness, and that was the Son, was it not? And we have been brought in to share in the greatest of things through Him.

JAG When the Lord speaks He makes it obvious, He makes it plain, that it is Himself that is speaking. I am not referring to His speaking through circumstances, but when He speaks by the Spirit, the believer knows that is Him because there is power in the voice. Now, whether you answer to that is up to you, but if you answer to it something is written on your heart by the Spirit so you are Christ's epistle, 2 Cor 3: 3.

RFW And what is written on the heart is Christ. It is a result of His own speaking; it is what is of Himself that is written.

JAG It is the importance of God speaking "in the person of the Son".

RFW So that all that is written is substantial, as we were saying, and the assembly is based on that, is it not? We do not get the truth of the assembly opened up by John, but really what the Lord goes over in chapter 17 underlies the development of the truth, the substantial nature of the truth of the assembly, what is formed for His pleasure.

JAG The family of God are like God.

RFW Yes. They bear the moral characteristics of God, do they not? That is a result of being born of God.

RG-y Do you think this kind of speaking that we are talking about now would in any sense connect with the service of God? What I am thinking of is that in this chapter the Lord is speaking to His Father. It is not limited by the state of those who are listening. There was a communication from the Lord to His Father. Do you think we touch something of that in the height of the service when we see divine things as divine Persons would have them, and get some understanding of the affections that flow between them?

RFW I think that the experience of what the Lord speaks of in John 17: 26 is really only known collectively. "The love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them". That character of love is really what we are able to enter into collectively in the service of God, do you think?

RG-y It seems to take us higher than verse 23. It says there, "thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me". You have the sense of being loved as Christ is loved, but here it seems to be more an impression of the Father's same love for Christ finding a place in our hearts. Is that right?

RFW There is nothing more blessed to us than that, because that

character of love could never have been made known until that blessed One was here. "The love with which thou hast loved me may be in them". It is a very remarkable thing that the love with which the Father loved the Son might be in us that we might love the Son with that character of love. It can only be by the Holy Spirit that we can touch it in some way. I think that really we touch it collectively.

JS I wondered about, "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world", then verse 26 says, "I have made known to them thy name". Is there some relation to "the men"? I wondered if the making known of the Father's name involves something more intimate in the love that the Father has.

RFW "Manifested", I thought, relates to what was seen in Christ. It is what was in expression, so that in some sense the Lord conveyed to His own whilst He was here an impression of the Father in all His greatness and blessedness. "I have made known to them thy name" was to bring them into a new relationship, was it not, that they had never been in before with the Father? And, as we have often been taught, "will make it known" looks on to John 20.

RG I am wondering in that way if it really is conveyed to us in what He says to Mary. It is interesting that He spoke to Mary but it was His voice that affected her and He says, "Mary", then she turned, and then He introduces the Father, "I have not yet ascended to my Father", and then He says, "go to my brethren and say to them ...". The collective position is secured, you might say, and His name is made known because not only is it "my Father and your Father", but "my God and your God" (John 20: 16-17); that is, "I ... will make it known".

RFW Yes, and we do not, I suppose, realise what it was for these disciples to be brought to know God in this way, in this new relationship as Father. We have been brought to know Him thus from the beginning of our Christian history. These Jewish believers were brought into the knowledge of God as their Father in a new way in which they had never known Him before, "my Father and your Father", "my God and your God". It is a very wonderful thing that the Lord was introducing them into a relationship that was going to abide, and abide eternally.

DCB You referred to chapter 1 as well. I just wondered if you would expand for us what the distinction is of the declaration and manifestation.

RFW Well, what do you say about it? I am sure you will have some thoughts as to it.

DCB You said already there was a setting out there in the declaration, what was set out. It would affect our hearts that it is from a Person who is in the bosom of the Father that that had been declared, and that would affect everyone who is touched by it.

RFW Quite so. "No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him", John 1: 18. Let us be clear as to that; there is no other God to be known than this. There is no other God. God has been fully declared. There is no successor to this, is there? He has been made known by a Person in such close and blessed relationship to Him, "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father".

GBG Could the declaration be applied to wider than the assembly? I am just asking about it. This is final, is it not? Other families will come into the knowledge of the Father but there is what is special for the assembly.

RFW So declaration would involve the full unfolding of all the mind and purpose of God, including the way in which God is going to secure everything for His pleasure in every family. But there is that which is distinctive to the assembly, when the Lord says, "my Father and your Father", "my God and your God". That is very distinctive, is it not?

JDG It is quite important to grasp hold of the fact, "who is in the bosom of the Father". "God ... at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son", is majestic but here it tells us the place He has come into which is a very intimate place indicating the grace of the dispensation is in mind.

RFW It is. It is not now the mountain that was on fire and the terror that accompanied that, but this blessed intimate relationship in which divine affections are to be made known, do you think?

JDG It is God's principle of mercy, "ye have come to mount Zion", Heb 12: 22.

RFW How good it is that we have been brought into some knowledge of the affections that exist between the Father and the Son, and that we are to be embraced in those affections ourselves.

CKR Would you extend for the testimony the idea of the Spirit speaking? Would you say something about that?

RFW In Revelation the Lord speaks of what the Spirit says to the assemblies. It is always an exercise to understand that there is something that is being currently said by the Spirit. What were you thinking?

CKR I was thinking that the Spirit has taken His abode in the assembly. 1 Timothy 4 says, "But the Spirit speaks expressly", v 1. It is a very strong and direct assertion of the operations of the Holy Spirit speaking to preserve the saints in the glory of the house of God, is it not?

RFW So we are thankful to have current ministry, the ministry that is published amongst us, and then there is constant speaking in our meetings, is there not? We have the readings, the preachings, ministry meetings. There must be something of the Spirit speaking in those, do you think?

CKR The point you started with, it is an amazing matter God speaking to me as an individual. Divine speaking continues in the Spirit - that is still a wonderful, glorious truth to grasp, is it not?

RFW It is. It is interesting when you come to 1 Corinthians 14, and Paul writes about spiritual manifestations, he immediately refers to speaking in the assembly. Spiritual manifestations in that chapter would be largely through speaking. There is something coming into expression. It has often been pointed out in 1 Corinthians 14, it is not exactly the Spirit speaking directly, but it is spiritual manifestations through, you might say, spiritual persons and that is what is to mark speaking in the assembly.

NJH Would what is referred to as to the Spirit in John 16: 13, "but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak" allow for God speaking "in ... Son"?

RFW Do you mean that God speaking "in ... Son" continues in that way through the Spirit's service. Is that what you have in mind?

NJH The divine arrangement is maintained, is it not?

RFW Quite so.

JTB Is that really confirmed in Hebrews? "Wherefore, even as says

the Holy Spirit, To-day if ye will hear his voice", Heb 3: 7. Does the speaking of the Holy Spirit really direct us to the speaking of Christ?

RFW Yes. I think the speaking of the Holy Spirit makes the Scriptures specially alive, "as says the Holy Spirit".

PAG I wondered about the fact that the speaking of the present dispensation seems to involve relationships that were not known before, and I wondered if that was distinctive.

RFW Yes, God speaking "in ... Son", and God declared by this One who is "in the bosom of the Father". Did you have more in mind?

PAG I was struck by the fact that God could choose to speak any way He wishes because of who He is, but He has chosen a particular way and the end in view seems to be "that the love with which thou hast loved me", that is, the Son, "may be in them and I in them". The objective appears to be the satisfaction of divine affections.

RFW It is a very blessed thing, is it not? When the Lord Jesus left this scene, He left those of whom this could be said, "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them". He left the knowledge of the Father and He left the knowledge of the Father's love. That was new, it was not known before, but now it is known and we trust this is our experience that we know something of the blessedness of the love of the Son, and the Father's love for the Son, and we enter into it and enjoy it collectively too.

TCM We often think of divine speaking to bring in help in the way of our state or where adjustment may be needed, and all that is necessary, but what you have read in John 17 shows that there is something more, something higher; yet it is all one thing, it is all one speaking, and the moral side underpins all that.

RFW Yes. Do you mean that the moral side is dealt with, and that sets us free to enter into the enjoyment of these new relationships?

JAG The bosom of Jesus is still available, is it not?

RFW Well, there was one who leant on it at a time of crisis, was there not? What do you say?

JAG I think the speaking is to draw us into the great area of divine love, the love which was with the Father.

RFW John especially was in the bosom of Jesus, and then he leant on

His breast, John 13: 25. There are things that are proceeding currently amongst us that might cause us to lean on the breast of Jesus, to understand what He is doing and what He is saying to us and what is in His mind for us in them, do you think?

Grangemouth

20th November 2011

T D Beveridge, Kirkcaldy; A M Brown, Grangemouth;
D C Brown, Edinburgh; J A Brown, Grangemouth;
J T Brown, Edinburgh; J A Gardiner, Aberdeen; R Gardiner, Kirkcaldy;
G B Grant, Dundee; J D Gray, Edinburgh; P A Gray, Grangemouth;
R Gray, Grangemouth; A R Henry, Glasgow; N J Henry, Glasgow;
W Lamont, Grangemouth; T C Munro, Grangemouth;
C K Robinson, Glasgow; J Spinks, Grangemouth; J Strachan, Dundee;
D A Stephen, Grangemouth; R F White, Londonderry

STABILITY AND SUBSTANCE

Andy E Mutton

Hebrews 13: 7, 8, 14-16

2 Timothy 2: 15

I would like to say a brief word, dear friends and brethren, as to stability and substance. These are two things our brother has demonstrated and they emanated from his unshakeable faith. The scripture we have read in Hebrews says, “imitate their faith”. Our brother would not have wanted to be described as a leader but he demonstrated these two things - stability and substance - that we would do well to imitate. As the brethren know well, the note to “their conversation” says, ‘manner of life’. We would do well to think over that at a time such as this. To have faith, the faith of those of us who have placed our trust in the Lord Jesus, is to be sure, and it is to be solid and firm. There is to be a simplicity about it, and an integrity that keeps our hearts stable until the Lord comes. What we have sung of (hymn 19) is a wonderful hope that the believer has in looking forward to when the Lord Jesus will come.

What drew me to this scripture were these words that we so often use in the gospel, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”. For those who have placed their trust in Him, “yesterday” was about the effecting of our salvation. That is what He has done. Our brother had his trust in that, and he would rarely be more animated than at the time when the glad tidings went out every week. Wherever believers are as the gospel is sounded out, and Jesus is spoken of as a Saviour for sinners, when they have that faith and that firmness and confidence in their heart, then they rejoice that such a One who “yesterday” died for their sins can be the root of this stability in their soul.

So, He is “the same yesterday”, but He is “the same ... **to-day**”. Today may be a day of sorrow and a day when maybe it seems that the pathway has changed and is a little bleaker, but “Jesus Christ is the same”, He is the same *today*. What a joy it brings to the hearts of believers to know that the One who died on the cross is risen. He lives, and He is the same today, although in a different condition. Praise God for the fact that He is glorified. He has burst the power of death itself. We are in the presence of death, but Christ has broken the power of it. What a mighty triumph then for the believer in the Lord Jesus to have.

He is the One who is "the same yesterday, and to-day". We have the faith to know that He is the same "to the ages to come". We have sung of Him coming for us. Once He comes for us we will be forever with Him. The Lord has taken our brother, but we soon will be caught up to be with Him, and He will be the same "to the ages to come". I would like to say that if there is anyone here who does not have stability in the soul, such as our brother had, such as so many in this room have, now is the opportunity to obtain it. God can speak so powerfully by way of death; think of that. Satan seeks to use death as his greatest weapon but God uses it to announce the glad tidings and to speak to souls. These are amazing things and I believe that God would do that today. It says, "considering the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith". That does not mean imitate mannerisms, or ways of speaking, but we imitate what was seen. That stability was seen in our brother and we would do well to imitate it.

Secondly, I refer to substance. It is without question that our brother had substance. We have proved it in this locality, we proved it in the area and wider, he had substance and he communicated of it. Usually substance in the Scriptures, and maybe here as well, refers to what we have by way of goods and by way of being able to entertain in our houses, but in chapter 10 of Hebrews it says, "knowing that ye have for yourselves a better substance, and an abiding one", v 34. Our brother worked in Oxford and was surrounded by those who have accumulated knowledge and wisdom according to learning, and he would often speak of the fact that despite all the years and years of work that went into such learning there was nothing accumulated of spiritual substance. The Christian has a better substance and an abiding one, and it lives and it is to be communicated. If someone communicates it, someone else is to receive it. We receive of such substance one from another and I would just submit that we should seek to commit ourselves to that line, to communicating of a spiritual substance. Scripture speaks of "communicating spiritual things by spiritual means", 1 Cor 2: 13. I would urge myself and others to seek to follow in such a line.

I read in Timothy because, having stability and substance, we are therefore to go out and we are to do something. It speaks here thus, "Strive diligently to present thyself approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed". But what I had especially in mind was, "cutting in a straight line the word of truth". A young brother said to me

the other day that he liked asking our brother a question in a Bible reading because you got a straight answer. That was always the case. It may not have been the answer you expected or wanted, but it was a straight answer according to the truth, “cutting in a straight line the word of truth”. Cutting means that you are moving forward and you are doing something that can be taken account of; and that falls to each one of us, to cut “in a straight line the word of truth”. Truth is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit and diligent study of the Scriptures and of the ministry, and through the present speaking of the Lord Jesus. In that way we are able to cut “in a straight line the word of truth”. Our brother, we can say, has stopped cutting now. What about us: are we going to cut, and what is our cutting going to look like? Will it be in a straight line? Will it be according to the truth? It is a challenge I take to myself and I would leave it with my brethren; but with faith, stability, and a substance that comes from being before God, we are able to do it.

For His Name's sake.

“THE GOD OF JACOB FOR HIS HELP”

John C Gray

Psalm 146: 1, 2, 5

Genesis 48: 14-16

It is always sobering to be in the presence of death. What our brother has said would be a comfort for our sister and the family, that the Lord Jesus has been there too and has conquered its power. That is a triumphant matter; the great triumph that the Lord Jesus has is evidenced in His rising from among the dead. God has given Him glory and honour and a place which, as man, He will occupy as the central point of the affections of God forever. But alongside of Him will be the saints. That is a wonderful matter.

Our brother read this scripture in the Psalm in the house where we were, on the morning that the Lord took him, and I thought that it was very appropriate as we look at this reference, “Blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help”. This psalm is a Hallelujah psalm, one of the psalms of praise, “As long as I live will I praise Jehovah”, and I hope that is true of everyone of us in relation to where we are as believers on

the Lord Jesus, that not only do we trust in Him and find clearance morally, but that we are indeed in the service of praise as our brother certainly was. That is a great comfort.

I trust that we will get help to understand that a person who receives “the God of Jacob for his help” will be blessed. To be blessed of God is to be made happy, to be rejoicing, in the sense in which we are set free. It is a great matter that every one of us can have help. Our brother experienced that throughout his lifetime with his wife. They experienced the help of the Lord in day to day matters and in year to year matters, matters that our brother has already mentioned that affected his employment, that affected his family, and that affected his movements in the testimony. He found “the God of Jacob for his help”. Do we find the God of Jacob for our help? That is a very good question for every one of us who believe at the present time. Jacob was a man of experience, he was a man who was up and down, and I have been up and down, and very many here have been up and down, but the God of Jacob comes to our help. Have we experienced it, beloved, every one of us? Many have gone through various and grievous experiences. Have we experienced “the God of Jacob” for our help? It says at one point that God protected Jacob as he travelled through the land on his way to Canaan and the terror of God was on his enemies and the nations round about him to protect Jacob, Gen 35: 5. Let us experience something of the God of Jacob for our help as our brother did undoubtedly.

When we come to the passage Genesis we find that it is Israel - Jacob got his name changed to Israel, meaning 'prince of God'. Think of the dignity that God would give every one who accepts experience with him and what has been said as to our brother's substance bears on that. The great character of stability and substance that has been spoken of bears on this matter of the prince of God. How are we in the testimony, not only as we said, towards God in praise and worship, but how are we in the testimony? Do we conduct ourselves as the prince of God, as Israel happily was? He is working intelligently. He accepted divine sovereignty. He accepted that God was going to bring in the nations. The firstborn would relate to His chosen *earthly* people. Joseph had to learn that lesson, about sovereignty, because he placed these two sons so that Jacob would have the right hand for the firstborn on the left. “But Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim's head - and his left hand on Manasseh's head; guiding his

hands intelligently, for Manasseh was the firstborn". Jacob used his hands intelligently because he knew what was in the mind of God for the gentiles. The prince of God knows the mind of God and knows how to act and how to proceed. Then he gives this blessing, "he blessed Joseph and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked", that was true of our brother as well: the ministry of the recovery, the great writings of the apostles including Paul - our brother was governed by them. Are we?

Then he says, "the God that shepherded me all my life long to this day". I like that expression, "shepherded me" - that is, that there was care and attention, not only that he was taught by God, but that he was carefully handled by God. Would that we would experience that. Do you understand that God is shepherding, "the God that shepherded me all my life long"? That is a great matter to take on and find out, that God is with us. But in how much of our daily occupation is God with us? How much do we understand the service of the Lord Jesus as One who is not only our High Priest, but Patron with the Father (1 John 2: 1) in relation to our lives? How much do we understand the Spirit of God in relation to the power that He has available to help us in spiritual matters? It is not just that we have our secular things to see to, but we have our spiritual history and spiritual relations with divine Persons to maintain. The Spirit of God would help us in that.

What a wonderful thing it is to come to know the Father, to know the fulness that is the divine intent for us all. "The God that shepherded me all my life long to this day, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil" - that would be what was current down here - "the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads". And then he is speaking about his name "and let my name be named upon them ... and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the land!" Would that there would be an increase of spiritual development, an increase of spiritual numbers amongst those who walk the separate path, those who move as "vessels ... to honour" (2 Tim 2: 20), separating themselves from everything that is dishonouring, everything that is iniquitous and evil religiously, that which is around us. Let us continue in this pathway that we may understand that this name is "named upon them ... and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the land!". What a fine thing it is to have blessing in the land. It is not just that our brother's sons have come into the testimony as a living matter, but the next generation is coming in - how good that is. These are the grandsons and they are coming into, and taking up, responsibility. Are they going to be

blessed? Will they be happy in it? Are they going to rejoice in it? May the Lord help us, and may we be comforted, and our beloved sister especially, in our link with God who has something far greater for us than what we have down here.

For His Name's sake.

“IN HIS OWN GENERATION”

Ron D Plant

Acts 13: 36 (to "fell asleep")

1 Chronicles 29: 1-5

Acts 13 is a wonderful chapter in which the apostle Paul is speaking about the glories of Christ and the glory of His resurrection. But today I refer to one verse in it which refers to David and speaks about him as one who, "having in his own generation ministered to the will of God, fell asleep". We are here amidst the generations, and so today we have the evidence of very young ones here through to very old ones. Of David it says that, in his own generation, he "ministered to the will of God". Beloved, there is no greater commendation that could be given to a man or a woman than that in their generation they served the will of God. The one who had to do with this translation of the Bible, in his early writings, said:

Lord! let me wait for Thee alone:

My life be only this -

To serve Thee here on earth, unknown;

Then share Thy heavenly bliss.

J N Darby (Spiritual Songs)

The times that David went through were not easy times, neither have been the times of our brother, neither will be the times of any one of us here. David went through great exercises, he went through exercises with his family, exercises of rejection; he went through exercises where he had to flee for his life. You can read of all in the account of the life of David. Our brother's life has not included these particular things perhaps, but there will have been other things which have entered into it. Some of us can look back on some of the times, as

it again says of David, "and the times that passed over him", 1 Chron 29: 30. Sometimes, just for a moment, we should think of that. There was one thing that sustained David all through it, through times when even his faith failed. It was his respect for the ark of God. He learned early, beloved young ones here, about the ark, which speaks of Christ, and of God's testimony. It says, "Behold, we heard of it at Ephratah", Psalm 132: 6. There are young people here who have heard of the Lord Jesus; they have heard the things connected with Him, they have heard the story of the gospel, they have heard these things, but then it says, "we found it in the fields of the wood". David was a man who, from that moment on, spent the whole of the rest of his life, in his generation, in seeking to find a better place for what was for God. I would like to encourage, especially the younger ones here, as our brother's generation of which some of us have part is beginning to pass from this scene, to do so too. What a thing it would be to look upon the younger persons here, to see those who have not only known about the Lord Jesus, not only known about divine truth, but have found it for themselves and who have set their hearts and their lives in relation to serving the will of God. I do not have the ability, and maybe there are many here who do not have the ability to become great persons here, surgeons, scientists and so on in this world, but you have the opportunity to be one who serves the will of God during the time that you live. Our brother was one who served the will of God in his generation. We could ask for no more than that. That is the commendation that he has and, beloved, I commit to you.

I read the scripture in Chronicles because it speaks about David's contributions. All the way through his life, through his afflictions which are spoken of earlier, he gathered material for the house of God. He had a desire to build a better place for God, to find a better place. The house of God at the present time is not a material building; it involves what is spiritual and moral. It involves what there is of God, an operative and formative working in the people of God, a dwelling place, where He dwells, where He finds His pleasure and His joy. If you think of David all through his life, through the conflicts, through the sorrows, through the exercises, through the years, he put something aside from all of it. He learnt something from all of it, about the God whom he loved. If you look at chapter 22, there is an immense amount of treasure that he contributed, as he says, "in my affliction ... for the house of Jehovah" (1 Chron 22: 14), but here in this chapter I have read he is coming to the end of his life, and he says, "Solomon my son ... is young and tender". If

you look at the younger generations here, if you look at this locality, marked largely by younger men and women, and young families, and you think of generations that are coming along, think of David's words as he says, "Solomon my son ... is young and tender, and the work is great; for this palace is not to be for man, but for Jehovah Elohim". Beloved brethren, it is a great thing to know what it is to have the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, to know what it is to have God for you; that is a precious thing, you can fill your life with the joy of that; but it is an even greater thing when you come to the realisation that you are to be for God. David came, not only to an appreciation of what God was to him, but he comes to serve in his spirit and his life and in what he contributed to what he could be for God. That is one of the greatest blessings of the present time. Our beloved brother was one who, through the whole of his life in the testimony, from early days, was committed in relation to what was for God. These are very fine things to me. I cannot go into the detail, it is just the scripture that affects me, "I have given of my own property, of gold". It was out of his affection for the house of his God. Affliction had dealt him its lessons, the years that have passed over us have yielded their lessons, but there was something that David had for himself that he had for his own treasure, and he made it available to God. Beloved friends and brethren, at the present time the richness of what David brought forward here for the completion of the house of God is something which is greatly needed amongst God's people. It is not only the structural idea, not only the way things are built up, and the principles which govern things, not only that, but for its adorning. Our brother loved the adorning, he loved the detail, he loved to speak of Christ. He was able to take up the precious things and he was able to distinguish them and he was able to lay them out; and he loved it and he enjoyed it. Beloved brethren, that is a privilege: you and I could enter into that and we could share it as a contribution to the house of God. So he says, "gold for things of gold" - it was not only the treasure: it was the things that the treasure formed. I just commend this to you; here it speaks of the quantity that he gave in his affection, and whilst the quantity is less than came out of his affliction, the quality - we have been taught - was higher. It is a very wonderful thing when the things of God reach our affections, and not only our conscience. When the things of God touch our affections, then there is a wonderful flow. Our brother had a part in it, he not only had part in it, but he loved it, and now he is with Christ.

It speaks of "the sure mercies of David", Isa 55: 3. I wonder

what that meant. David in his lifetime, and in his last words, speaks about the bright hope that he had; he said "And he shall be as the light of the morning ... A morning without clouds; when from the sunshine, after rain, The green grass springeth from the earth", 2 Sam 23: 4. He had a hope in his heart that, when all the trouble and the sorrow would cease, there was a wonderful prospect for him. That was David. But our brother not only had the promise, but now he has the reality of it. He found the light of the morning. Have you got that? It is something that is our privilege at the present time that we can come into the knowledge and blessedness of "the light of the morning ... A morning without clouds". Jesus is in resurrection: we had a word recently that the first resurrection has begun and soon there will be a wondrous host who will be part of it. Our brother will be among them, and we will be among them, we will be caught up to be forever with the Lord, 1 Thess 4: 17. Our brother had the light of morning in his heart. May we all be helped that we might have our part, as this last verse says, "who is willing to offer to Jehovah this day?".

May we be encouraged, For His Name's sake.

Witney

26th November 2010

(At the meeting for the burial of Mr John McKay)

CHRIST - OUR FOOD AND LIFE

C Kenneth Robinson

Luke 22: 39-44

1 John 3: 2-3

I would like to say a short word, as I am able, to call attention to Christ as He was and Christ as He is. Christ as He was is food for the believer; Christ as He is also is to be the life and hope of the believer. Solomon has already been referred to, drawing from 1 Kings 10. The Lord Himself in the reference in Matthew then says, "and behold, more than Solomon is here", chap 12: 42. I wish to speak about the true Solomon. There are a lot of tests these days publicly and amongst the saints, and I suggest that there is a need for us all to be recalled to the necessity of feeding on the moral qualities that came out in perfection in Jesus. I have only read of one of them in Luke. We are reading Mark on Lord's day. I came across a remark of Mr James Taylor when he said that we have to study Luke in order to understand Mark, (vol 15 p7); as if you may need to feed on the Man as in Luke before you take on any of the characteristics of the perfect Servant as in Mark. I wonder, beloved brethren, if there is a danger that we slip away from feeding upon the moral characteristics that came out in the perfection of the life of Jesus. May I ask you if you have fed on any of these perfections today? Have you given any consideration, in your reading or your contemplation, to the perfection of the moral qualities that came out in Jesus? What were they? Time would not allow us to go over them but we can contemplate things such as that He loved righteousness and He hated lawlessness, Heb 1: 9; He was characteristically dependent; He was One who did not seek His own will, as it says here, but was totally committed to the will of His God and Father. He demonstrated compassion, and brought out the very feelings of God in grace. These and many more features came out in Christ. Christ as He was is a divine provision for food for the believer. The manna was there every morning in the wilderness, as we know, fresh every morning. God provided the manna for the tents of the Israelites so that there was a fresh provision, divine provision, every morning to sustain and stimulate and preserve the Israelites. Beloved brethren, we need the manna every day. Never let us forget that it was on that life that the heavens were opened, and the Father's voice could

say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt 3: 17. There never had been a Man on earth like Jesus. There never had been one in manhood who brought out every feature which God desired to find in Man. It is good if we ask the Holy Spirit to help us as we waken each day, and go into each day, to think and feed on the moral perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ. That order of Man delighted heaven, and every feature of that order of Man as brought out now in the saints causes great pleasure to our God and Father. How precious these things are! The testimony in all its glorious moral character is a representation of Christ in life and moral qualities. I believe that the strength of the local company will reflect the measure in which every individual brother and sister feeds on the perfections of Jesus. Ponder them, and pray about them, so that we become accustomed to these features. We are going through a world of unrighteousness, independence, hatred, hardness, jealousy, strife, and competition. We, as believers, see and value precious moral qualities in the Man whom we love and desire to be more attached to; so features that are of God and meet with the glory of God are increasingly demonstrated by us. Christ as He was has to be our food.

But I got a real sense on Lord's day that, although we never saw Christ as He was, we will soon actually see Christ as He is. Wonderful matter! It is a wonderful matter to contemplate Christ as He is as a glorified Man above. We have great affection for Him but, ponder it, dear brother and sister, we will actually see Him as He is and, more than that, we will be like Him when we see Him as He is. What elevating and stirring thoughts, that we shall see Him. Christ as He is is the One we know, and He is to be our life and object. The prospect soon is that we will see Him as He is. Can we take it in, that the Man who glorified God on the earth, the Man who was raised from amongst the dead by the glory of the Father, taken up into glory in the worth of His own Person with redemption accomplished, we shall see and be made like Him? Christ is glorified, and there He is at the right hand of God, and our body of humiliation soon will become conformed to that glorious One, our body of humiliation will be conformed to His body of glory. "We shall see him as he is". What a moment! When the rapture happens, the dead in Christ rise first and we the living who remain - that is us, should it happen tonight - will be caught up, and will be changed, and when we see Him we shall be like Him. Oh, beloved brethren, we shall see Him

as He is! We can feed on Him as He was, but the prospect before us is to see Him as He is. May that encourage all our hearts a little more, for His Name's sake.

Glasgow

8th February 2011