

A
WORD
IN ITS
SEASON

1st Series

No. 139

October 1984

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THE GLORY OF CHRIST

John 17: 5; Ephesians 4: 10; Hebrews 4: 14

M.P. In the first section read we see what it meant to the Lord Jesus personally to be glorified as man with this glory. As is known we find in this chapter threefold glories of the Lord. This glory is that of absolute deity which we can neither behold nor share. Then we find a glory which we shall behold but not share: that is the glory of the Firstborn amongst many brethren. And then there is the glory that He has given to us: that is the manhood glory that He has secured for us also. Truly this glory (John 17: 5) is the greatest of all. We may worshipfully consider it now and get an impression of what it meant to the Lord personally to receive this glory which He as God had previously had from eternity.

W.M. Verse 5 which we have read follows verse 4 where the Lord said, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have completed the work which thou gavest me that I should do it". The Lord has accomplished this for us and has completed the will of God. Now He has a claim to be glorified. Thus it surely is for us: in order to get an impression of the glory we need to do the will of God and take up the work of the Lord.

M.P. We can certainly say that the Lord had an absolute right to claim the glory apart from the great work of fulfilling the will of God.

The Lord Jesus had at all times a right to that wonderful glory; nevertheless He has carried out the will of God to the utmost.

Indeed He knew what God's purpose was. He was perfectly ready to carry out this plan and to go into death. How wonderful it was indeed that before, as later beyond, death, this amazing realm opened up before Him and He pondered it anew! How He would be greeted in this realm! What a welcome from the Father! How the everlasting doors lifted themselves up so that the King of glory might enter! (see Ps 24). But the greatest of what He received was that which He indeed had from eternity, but now as man.

K.R. Is it John's line to present the person of the Lord Jesus? I am thinking of chapter 1 where His glory is contemplated, that of an only-begotten with the Father.

M.P. I would say that was rather His human glory which He then had and which understandably had its lustre from the divine glory.

That was perhaps more the Man who had come down from the glory. But now we have the Man who entered into the glory. It is wonderful in this connection to remember what the first man was who was made of dust and returned to dust. We read of the Lord that He came from God and went to God (see John 13: 3). But perhaps we find in our present consideration something more, and that is the glory of God seen even in connection with men. I believe we could not find words to express what it means, but when we think of a Man glorified with the absolute glory of God it is transcendent and exceedingly great.

H.L. This thought would impress and fill us especially at the end of the service of God, as far as we are able to apprehend it, although we have no part in it. Is it in this sphere that we worship?

M.P. Yes. As we read in chapter 1, He has revealed to us God who dwells in light unapproachable. No one has seen God but the only-begotten Son who is in the Father's bosom has declared Him. But perhaps this is the other side of the matter, that He is God in manhood, so that He for Himself, so to say, was glorified with divine glory. One feels that here we reach the boundary of what is to be apprehended. It is indeed a limit that we cannot pass but where we can receive impressions of what is divinely great. This is the great God in His own realm and the only Man who has or will ever tread on that ground - the Son who is in the bosom of the Father in the sphere of unapproachable light. I believe that this awakens our spirits to worship the greatness and sublimity and majesty of this wondrous Person. I am thinking in this connection of these words when He said "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God, and your God", John 20: 17. Our brother Mr Taylor said once in connection with these words that we should ponder what is to be understood by Christ's God, what it meant for Him when He could

say "My God". What a knowledge of God He had as man! What a wonderful relationship and reciprocity of relationship between Him as man and God as His God! But here He is as Man glorified with the absolute glory of God. These are things that cannot be reasoned out but are for adoration.

R.M. The apostle writes to the Corinthians: "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit" 2 Cor 3: 18. It is important that we should look upon that which the Lord has set before us.

M.P. And the Lord, the Spirit uses such an opportunity to transform us to the same image. In this way we come as near as possible to this realm, yet we must again remember that this sphere is for us limited. But for the Lord Jesus it is not limited, He has absolute access to the boundless realm of uncreated and unapproachable light. So that this awakens in our hearts feelings which lead to fresh worship of His Person.

H.L. What does the expression 'uncreated light' mean? We sang of it this morning.

M.P. That is the region of which it says "God is light". God remains from eternity to eternity in His own sphere where all is in full accord with Him. We cannot say at all that it is a created realm for it is inseparably associated with God Himself. And it is the realm that is marked by unapproachable light where foot of creature has never trod. Indeed it is where God Himself alone dwells, as we sing in Hymn 242: 'In realms of light where foot has never trod - The high and lofty, the eternal God!' No foot of man has ever penetrated there except of course the foot of our blessed Lord Jesus. He is no creature but as God has an eternal right, and one peculiar to His Person, to tread this realm. Would this be right?

H.L. We could perhaps say that, although we cannot penetrate there, we can experience that love and light are there. Divine love is seeking persons in whom this love will be expressed.

M.P. We can indeed not penetrate there but, as far as we can understand it, out of this sphere has been brought something that is placed at our disposal, presented and given to us, so that we should embrace as much as our minds can grasp. It all comes from this wonderful divine realm so that God is revealed to us in the blessed face of our Lord Jesus as light and love.

W.M. Can we connect with this Revelation 21: 23? It says "And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon, that they should shine for it; for the glory of God has enlightened it".

M.P. Yes, the glory that comes from the uncreated sphere shines into that sphere.

H.L. Is it right to say that 2 Corinthians 4: 6 confirms this?

M.P. Yes: "Because it is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

H.L. We shall see that face!

M.P. Yes, we shall see the face of Christ. In the previous chapter there was a comparison with Moses as a type who came from the presence of God and whose countenance shone. The glory of God in the measure in which it could then be revealed shone from his face. In any case the people could not bear it. In comparison with that it is the case in the present connection that the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ who came from out of the realm of uncreated light.

J.M. Could we say that Stephen had an impression of the glory of God? He said "Lo, I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God", Acts 7: 56.

M.P. And the glory shone in his face for he was changed into the same image.

J.M. Paul also had such an impression when the light from heaven shone upon him. He could not bear it but was blinded.

M.P. But even before, he had received an impression of it when he saw the face of Stephen. And for this reason he was able to understand the Lord's word "Why persecutest thou me?", for he had seen Christ in Stephen. These are things which had their origin in the realm where Christ has now entered having, according to our second scripture, fulfilled all. Truly He that descended is the One who has also ascended up above all heavens. This is a word that has much impressed me, for those heavens are created ones and above all of them He has ascended right into the realm of uncreated light where He fills all things. It is indeed a wonderful fact that God's eternal world will be filled by Christ. God will see Christ in all, everything before Him will speak of Christ. Thus Christ fills all things and in this comes also God's thought for the assembly, as we read in Colossians, where Christ is all things and in all (see chap 3: 11). It is something that the Spirit desires to reach in us, that the assembly as a divine and heavenly area here below should be characterised by the fact that He fills all things. That is a condition which heaven is marked by. On this account spiritual ministry beams out to us so that we should strive at the full-grown man, the fulness of the Christ, so that the assembly corresponds in everything to Him and He finds in us a full expression of Himself and that in the assembly He fills all things. This is the objective of all ministry that He has sent down to us, who has first descended and then ascended into heavenly glory.

R.B. Can we say that the Lord Jesus, although He came down to this earth, never left deity?

M.P. In a certain sense we can say that. Actually the glory was always with Him although it was in a way hidden. The lowly form which He took hid this glory in some sense. He assumed all the humiliation of man and this was so far true that He could even die.

He took upon Himself weariness, hunger, thirst, and by these things the shining of divine glory in Him was in a way hidden. Of God we could not say that He hungered, thirsted or was weary, nor, of course, that He could die. But the glory was there nevertheless. In Mr Darby's hymn (No.188) it says 'We see the Godhead glory Shine through that human veil'. The glory was thus hidden yet was always

there. But now the divine glory in Christ is unveiled. The risen and glorified Christ is a full setting forth of the glory of God.

K.R. Is it your impression that when He fills all in heaven He then is "everything and in all" as it says in Colossians?

M.P. Yes, it was my thought that, if this is so in heaven, it must also be the case in the assembly too. It will in any case be the fact in a full way. But it should be our exercise to reach it more and more now. This is the direction and objective of all ministry. And we have read from Ephesians about the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry to edify the body of Christ "until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ". This indeed when Christ will be everything and in all: it is the full measure.

K.R. Christ the heavenly Man!

M.P. Yes the heavenly Man who comes into full expression in the assembly. Mr Raven said 'I cannot say that a person sees me - he sees only my body'. Thus none can see Christ but we can see His body which is here below. How wonderful this is! And what an exercise it should be for us that if we are the body of Christ He should be seen and set forth in us. The wonderful characteristics of His Person as a heavenly man should shine out in the assembly which is His body.

W.M. In Exodus 40 it says in verse 34: "And the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle". It says here, He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. Thus the assembly is filled with the glory of God and I thought that it is good to know that the glory of God is also in us, for it is that which beams out from Christ to every believer. Can we say this?

M.P. Yes surely. And there is also what it says in Acts 2 where all were filled with the Holy Spirit (see v 4). Thus Christ came into expression in them.

H.L. May we hear something about Ephesians 1: 23; "the fulness of him who fills all in all"? The assembly is His fulness.

M.P. Yes, this is also something exceedingly great. I was thinking recently how Scripture speaks of the fulness of the Godhead and by this we can understand the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That is God revealed in His fulness. If we speak of the fulness of Christ we must think of Christ and the assembly. Christ and the assembly form an indissoluble whole. In a sense we can say that Eve was the fulness of Adam: it was not good for the man to be alone. There was not the fulness without Eve. And Christ as man must not be alone for eternity. His fulness will then be the assembly and He and the assembly will be an inseparable whole. She is His body and the fulness of Him who fills all in all. This is again such a thought that we cannot comprehend but which fills us with adoration. To what a privilege, beloved brethren, we are called, to be the fulness of Christ and form with Him one entity which never ceases, is never broken into and will never be separated!

W.M. And therefore it is well worth while to maintain what He has disclosed to us. "Hold fast what thou hast, that no one take thy crown", Rev 3: 11. Is the glory a special crown?

M.P. And Scripture also speaks of holding fast the Head. In Colosse there were some who did not do this. These are living links and not a theory, it is a living link with the Head by the Spirit eternally and must come into expression. The glory which we share with Christ is surely a great goal which we have to reach. But I think that, if we hold fast what we have then no one can take our crown. This is perhaps linked with what we now experience. It is the key to the writings to the overcomers in the seven assemblies that the promises to them contain what all believers will share in the glory after the rapture of all the saints. But to the overcomer it is promised for the present time and is what he reaches now, and this is something that can be taken from us. We could lose this and therefore the warning to beware that no one take our crown. If we are overcomers we are able to obtain the crown in a certain sense even here below.

K.R. Is it important to understand what glory is?

M.P. I believe that is so.

K.R. We have to experience suffering but glory awaits us.

M.P. In order that we may have help in our sufferings and difficulties we have the High Priest who has passed through the heavens. I believe it is very comforting that we have a Helper who is in the eternal and uncreated sphere of light. We could think of no greater help, a help whose source is in the absoluteness of Godhead where the great High Priest has entered. He has passed through the heavens which is even beyond the holiest for we can enter there, but we cannot go through the heavens, we cannot approach into uncreated light. We have a High Priest who is not only beyond the veil into the holiest but One who is in the realm of uncreated light. This is exceedingly wonderful and precious.

K.R. In the presence of God.

M.P. Yes, in the immediate presence of God, in Godhead itself. He is indeed a Man but we must distinguish His manhood from His divinity, but not separate them. He is Man and remains God. We cannot contemplate His manhood and His divinity at the same time but we must always be conscious that these are inseparable. What a wonderful Person He is! This Person serves us in our wilderness path here below in the midst of such weakness. He has experienced the path Himself and He is now for ever above and beyond the trials but He has not forgotten what they entail, so that, as we further read, He can have sympathy with those still on the path which He has for ever behind Him. He feels fully for those who are still in it. Indeed we shall soon have it behind us as well.

W.M. Therefore the encouragement is for us as we spoke yesterday about "Today" and are confirmed by the "Let us therefore". This "Now" is the present moment. We have received an impression of the glory; the fulness of it we shall know when with Him. So now we can go on together for "let us" is in the plural. The apostle desired to encourage the Hebrew saints thereby and wanted to move on with them. He placed himself on the same ground as they were on so as

to maintain this precious experience. That should also be an encouragement to our younger brethren to hold fast together with us. It is a part which the world does not know; it understands nothing of the glory but knows only what is transient.

M.P. The encouragement here is at the highest possible level. We could not think of a higher level than absolute Godhead and uncreated light. Thus we have One who cares for our interests in the true heart of Godhead, in glory.

K.R. We shall soon see Him as He is. We shall be like Him. We shall see Him as He is.

M.P. We see Him and all these wonderful things only as through a dim window obscurely. We must remember however what sort of a window the apostle had in mind. He did not think of a mirror as we might have now where everything would be perfectly reflected. They then had quite dim and diffuse materials. Yes, we see dimly but, as you say, we shall see Him face to face.

H.L. Is it wonderful to see, as it is in our passage in Ephesians, how the Lord serves His assembly and how He serves us each individually? We need and receive this personal service from Him as High Priest so as to enjoy this wonderful glory and to approach the throne of grace. We are in need of this especially for the week before us.

M.P. We find wonderful comfort and powerful help and can trace the source of the help in the High Priest who has gone through the heavens. Nothing more elevated could we think of. Thus may we be encouraged in our wilderness path which is not an easy one and which we cannot expect to get easier. It is dark in the world and will grow darker, but here is the realm of uncreated and unapproachable light where the Lord Jesus has entered for us and from thence streams to us the glory of His wonderful Person which is shed upon our wilderness path. So we must continue to do what it speaks of in Hebrews 12: "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the failing knees, and make straight paths for your feet" (vv 12, 13). This will help us much to be looking upwards and to be encouraged by

what is granted to us through the unbounded and illimitable grace and mercy of our God.

EAST GERMANY

22 January 1983

MEETING FOR MINISTRY

(i) P.W.Hickmott

Mark 14: 3-9

We were looking at this passage some weeks back, and as thinking of it since, one thing that stood out to me is the timing of what this woman did. There is the value and preciousness of what she did to Christ, but the striking thing to me seems to be the timing of it. In a sense the feature of its value, as the Lord draws attention to it, is that she understood what was taking place, and she was close, could we say, to the divine mind, and came forward with what she had at exactly the right moment relating to what was immediately, ahead of our blessed Lord Jesus. I wonder, if in that sense, it does not have a bearing on us. There was a word some months ago as to the persons who had understanding of the times, they knew what Israel ought to do. I just raise it as an enquiry as to how much we understand the time in which we are and what is suitable to it in relation especially to Christ's affections.

Think of the dispensation; little we may know of its history. Certain things came in at certain times, but if we think of the revival, as we speak of it, when the precious light was recovered, of the Head in heaven and the body here, what is the essential matter, if we could say that, of the revival that we may see it in proportion in what has happened? I think we could say that, even in the revival there has been a time for certain things. Some of us do not know much about it. Certain matters entered into the service of Mr Darby, conflict to set teaching in order that had its bearing, I suppose, on the whole of Christendom. Then there was a time for something else: think of the service of a man like Mr Stoney; and in the service of Mr Raven certain things entered into his time in the development of the teaching, the accuracy of what came in. Things were set in order and they are on record for us in the skill, can we say, of divine teaching. Some of us are finding out that our constitution is defective unless there is a structure built there soundly of the

teaching at that time. Then there has been another time, if we could suggest it; think of the development, the filling out as it were, of what relates to the working of the assembly and the working of a local assembly, and what is set out in relation to response to God, what flows out of the Lord's supper; there has been a time in which that has come out. Then other things have happened, have they not? We need perhaps to review what has happened in our time.

So we come to the present moment, and that is one's exercise, at least for myself, and I would commend it to the brethren to ponder - what is suited to the present time in relation to the response to Christ's heart? It says of this woman; "She has beforehand anointed my body for the burial". In this case the death and burial of the Lord Jesus was immediately at hand, and she perceived the moment to do what she did. Well, I think we are aware that the time of the rapture is immediately at hand. The conditions are sorrowful publicly wherever you look, but the longing would surely be in true hearts that we could perceive that there is something furnished that would correspond to this woman in what she was able to minister to Christ's heart at that particular point.

So it is a very attractive thing, a very blessed thing, that the Lord could be ministered to, we can say, femininely. Can we each in our little settings be stimulated in this and. thoughtful about it, so that there is something working out femininely that the Lord can draw attention to? Would it not be wonderful if in a day to come the Lord could say, Well, there it was, it was exactly what met My heart relating to the specific time in which certain things were being worked out. I just suggest it; I think it is attractive, and might I suggest it is also needed. We can go on so much that we know and understand and even value, but may we function and think sensitively so that what is exactly fitting to the present time is ministered to Christ, and also to be under His hand towards God. Amen.

MEETING FOR MINISTRY

(ii). F.C.Mutton

Song of Songs 5: 10,11 (to "gold")

I would say just simply, dear brethren, that my thoughts were running on Mark 14, and I am very thankful our beloved brother has read it and spoken on it. I would desire to link on with that, especially the impression the Lord has given us as to what befits a certain time.

May I just give one impression that I think links with what he has said as to the surroundings at that time? The chief priests and the scribes in Jerusalem were seeking how they might seize Him and kill Him, and in Bethany He was in the house of Simon the leper. Does it not apply today - the bitter enmity of the enemy, of Satan, with his agents, against Christ, and also the public reproach such as might be connected with the house of a leper? That is what we have been involved in; thank God if we have judged it, and in that sense have personally got clear of it; but that is our public situation.

I feel the point and preciousness of what our brother has said that at such a time, and in such an environment, the most precious service is to continue where Christ alone is before us. I felt it linked with this verse in the Song of Songs. I think this is what the woman of Mark 14 would say: "My beloved is white and ruddy, The chiefest among ten thousand". (The footnote says, Strictly, 'lifted up as a banner'). Oh, that that may ever be so, dear brethren! Other banners have been lifted up, but now our Beloved is lifted up, the chiefest among ten thousand. Who else is worthy to be supreme? Who else is worthy, as it were, to be a banner lifted up that commands our loyalty and devotion save our Beloved, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ?

It was His head the woman anointed; it must represent on her part not only great affection but great intelligence. "His head is as the finest gold" - that blessed Man who always thought for God, who ever sought the Father's will, and who as a blessed Man in headship embraces and encompasses the whole vast scope of the will

and pleasure and purpose of God. Paul speaks of "the mind of Christ", 1 Cor 2: 16. Let us always be worshipfully in relation to Him and anointing Him. In a negative way would that not preserve us from making too much of any mere man or any servant at all? He is the glorious Head of the whole anointed system; everything that is for the pleasure of God is headed up in Him. One was impressed recently by that expression of Paul's in Ephesians 1: "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for the administration of the fulness of times; to head up all things in the Christ" - the One whose head is as the finest gold, who is, and will ever be, presiding over the whole area that is for God's pleasure, and according to His thoughts - "His head is as the finest gold". Let us hold fast the Head, reverently, worshipfully and dependently; all that is finest is there. What a word this is; "the finest gold". We get various kinds of gold in Scripture, gold of Ophir and other gold. The "finest gold" relates to the mind of Christ, what is His mind as to the assembly, what is His mind in any situation.

It just comes to me that we have been praying about situations among the saints, sometimes complex, sometimes difficult to resolve, but we have One as our Head whose head is as the finest gold. Let us lay hold of Him and draw from Him, because there is light and wisdom there for every situation, and from Him all is to be derived that fills out what is proper to the assembly, "the fulness of him who fills all in all". Amen.

MEETING FOR MINISTRY

(iii) F.G.Suckling

1 John 4: 17-19

We often think of this verse, "even as he is, we also are in this world", and it would seem that that statement is set here in the midst of this matter of love. "We have known and have believed the love which God has to us... God is love, and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him". Then John says "Herein has love been perfected", and then "that even as he is, we also are in this world". I

was thinking of that, beloved, in the sense of our being affected in a continual way by the love of Christ as being the wonderful thread that goes through all the time in our relations individually with divine Persons, and particularly, as we are thinking, with Christ, and how it has its answer in us as together. It says; as he is, we also". It is a wonderful thing that, while we have a sense of the love of God and how it has come out to us in the operations of grace in the revelation, and through the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is made good in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, there is this wonderful binding effect that it has in a practical way in those among whom the Lord has set us. It has affected me somewhat, and will more and more I hope as the time goes on, as one moves around to observe this wonderful love that there is among the saints. God has given us to enjoy this love, which He has shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and has given us a sense of the Father's love. He has given us the saints to work these things out with and to enjoy these things together. In all our comings together, or our relations with each other in seeking to go on in the truth together, the wonderful binding thing is the love that is there. So it says "as *he* is, we also are in this world". The Lord said Himself that men would know that we are disciples of His if we have love amongst ourselves (see John 13: 35). I feel that if there was more of this operating (we know there are other matters that have to be lined up with it), if this love that has come to us from above were known more by us we would be helped that matters that may disrupt have little or no place with us, because we would fear that this love, this divine love, might be spoilt, if we could so say. It is a wonderful thing that, with the saints that the Lord has set us with, firstly, I think we can all say we have love amongst ourselves, and it is a substantial love that we can depend on because it is from God, and it extends out, and as we move amongst the saints and as the saints come to us, there is that wonderful love operating. We have been thinking of the Lord Jesus as He is in His present position; the love that operated in Him down here is exactly the same love; there is no change in that love, it is still operating, and love is a living thing, and it is what would keep us. The apostle says that whatever we do we are to do in love. We are

to work out the truth in love all the time, and I am sure that if we can be more and more loving one another in that way as lovers of the truth and seeking to go on together, there is that that is divine that comes from above by the Holy Spirit, and we shall appreciate it and enjoy it. It is that that will keep us here going on together. It is really the nature of God, as we know, and this should be operating in us.

In John's gospel chapter 13 it says of the Lord Jesus: "having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end" (v 1).

That is the settled disposition of love. The love of friendship is a wonderful love, but the settled disposition of love is also a very exalted idea and is stable and reliable. As we have that in our hearts more, and it is moving us at all times - especially in those that the Lord has set us with in our immediate settings - we shall be helped to go on, and we shall see that love operating in the saints everywhere. It is the great matter, so to say, that will win through, that will always stand the test. Whatever exercises the saints have to go through, if there is love amongst ourselves, as Paul says, it "never fails" (1 Cor 13: 8), and it is a thing that is going to abide when faith and hope shall cease. It is the love of Christ and that is what we are affected by all the time. It has been brought to us by the Lord Jesus personally, and then the love of the Father, and the love of the Holy Spirit and all that He is doing for the Father and the Son. It is a wonderful experience to have and to go on with all the time. May the Lord help us in it, for His Name's sake.

CHRISTCHURCH NZ

5 September 1983

EXTRACTS

You begin by loving the brethren, but then you are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood; then to you that believe is the preciousness. That is, as we get increasing light as to Christ, we become knit together; the bond is increased as we get more light in regard of Christ. We thus get not only the Christian circle, but we get the spiritual house, the one priesthood, the one generation and one nation; the bond is strengthened.... The more apprehension we get of Christ, the greater the effect in binding us together, and the more unity is promoted. When divisions come in amongst us and we are broken up, it has not indicated increasing light with regard to Christ, for light in regard to Christ tends to build up and unite. These Jews had an apprehension of the Christian circle, they loved the brethren unfeignedly, and they were a spiritual house, a chosen generation; it tended in the direction of promoting unity. It is a very important principle that light does not tend to disintegration but to unity, and I believe that is the true way of unity. We all beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image (see 2 Cor 3: 18). The effect is produced upon all of us; we all feel it. It brings us together, and nothing else will. There is only one house and one priesthood. The Spirit produces an apprehension of Christ, and it tends in the direction of unity, and the effect is that God shines out..... Unless we are in the reality of our relation to Christ and of the Christian circle in unity, we cannot go out rightly in our individual path in this world.

(F.E.Raven: New Series No.4, pp.41,42)

May we live more as those who will meet one another in glory.

(J.B.Stoney: New Series No.8, p.452)

THE CHILDREN'S FORGIVENESS

It has been said that the words in every European language which express pardon or forgiveness all imply a *free* gift. The reason that God gave for blotting out the sins of His people was "for mine own sake", and we know that God is love. It is neither any goodness in man that makes Him willing, nor does the evil in man make Him unwilling to forgive. A free confession finds a free pardon and a further experience of the loving-kindness of God.

"Our God will abundantly pardon" surely is a *full* forgiveness. It is very wonderful that our sins have been a means of drawing out the resources of love and wisdom in the blessed God. Faith accepts this and glories in it. What we speak of as atonement is the righteous covering over of sins by the blood of Jesus which cleanses from all sin just as the snow covers ugliness with purity. Remission of our sins as believers relates to the precious fact that the burden of them was 'carried away' when He bore on the cross the judgment due to us. But besides these - blessings the known forgiveness of the God against whom we have sinned is something even more personal and intimate.

Forgiveness is also *final* because of the words of the loving and aged apostle John: "I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake". This is the assured condition of every Christian by virtue of the name and renown of Jesus. It would

include the "little children" to whom he writes other things also. The gift of the Holy Spirit to the obedient believer and the words of Scripture should preserve us from sinning after conversion. Even if there should be such failure, provision has been made before the Father in the person of Jesus Christ at His right hand. Do you know Him as one who cares constantly for you?

J.C.Evershed