

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

SECOND SERIES

No. 140

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BEING CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF GOD'S SON

Romans 8: 28-30

Philippians 3: 20-21

1 John 3: 1-3

JL The thought in mind for this reading was to consider the blessed divine proposal that we should be conformed to the image of God's Son. The first section read in Romans seems rather to present the thought as an answer to the purpose of God, and outlines steps taken by God to accomplish what He has designed according to His own love and predestinated us to be brought into.

In the second passage in Philippians we have a particular reference to our bodies, currently bodies of humiliation, being brought into conformity to His body of glory, and the section there rather seems to be presented as an act of power to be finally accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who will bring about that necessary transformation in order that what is suited to the mind of God in the eternal state of blessedness, that we will be brought into shall be fully prepared for.

And then in 1 John it is very much identified with the Father's love: some fine thoughts connected with what God has been pleased to do bringing us into the family, the children of God, and indicating that the finality of what will apply has not yet been fully disclosed, except that we know "we shall be like him". How comforting that thought is: "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"; but while in Philippians that final conformity will be brought about by an act of power on the part of the Lord Jesus, John also brings in this additional thought that it should create personal exercise with us now to become more like Him, everyone having "this hope in him purifies himself, even as *he* is pure".

No doubt there are many other scriptures that can be drawn upon to help in the enquiry but that may provide a basis for us to look at the thought.

RWMcC It is a wonderful contemplation, is it not, conformity to His Son? We know that the Father's delight is in His Son. We are brought into a place of nearness in His love but in a sense it is more than that, is it not? It is conformity *to*: where it says when "we see him we shall be like him". It is the same order, is it not?

JL I think it is a very blessed step forward in relation to what engaged us in our earlier reading, because clearly Christ will remain our Object throughout eternity, but this is a further thought that He will not only be before me as the blessed Object of my affections, and the Object too of the assembly's affections, the blessed Bridegroom.. We know "we shall be like him", we shall "be conformed to the image of his Son". I suppose the full answer to that is sonship for the saints to be brought into and nothing less would satisfy God. *It is a marvellous thing to think of an entire universe that will speak to God of Christ in its every feature.*

RWMcC It is all secured on moral grounds. There is no question to be raised is there? Questions all done away with; everything will be in perfect accord with the Father's mind, God's mind.

JL Yes, that is a very important thing to carry forward in our thoughts as well. We often say that what will, in that respect, be accomplished will be in no way a veneer over something which is rather unsuitable, but in depth and fullness everything will be in perfect accord with the mind of God because of the way it has been brought about. Not only is it based on the purpose of God, but through His calling, alerting us and bringing us into the understanding of what He has in mind in being justification, and then being glorified. These steps we may get help on as we enquire together.

RDP Ephesians speaks about "until we all arrive ...at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ", chap 4: 13. It speaks about the work of the ministry, what has come down as the result of an exalted Christ, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, "with a view to the work of the ministry ... until we all arrive ... at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ". I have been thinking about that. Somewhere in ministry (JT vol 33 p 266-7) I have read that that is the Christ of the gospels,

that God will have the features of that Man seen all over again in myriads, and then His triumph will be complete: He will have Christ again.

JL Yes, that is very attractive. We can understand that God would not be satisfied with anything less, and it is altogether marvellous that He should purpose that for us, to bring us into the blessedness of His own delight in Christ. I think these are steps taken in the process of us all arriving are proceeding now, are they not?. I think that is what was in your mind, and we trust in some way even today there is progress forward to that point of increase in stature until there is final conformity brought about. Nevertheless we have this assurance God will not be defeated in His purpose and it will be brought about, will it not?

RDP I think we think of the ministry as being behind a desk or something but “the work of the ministry” involves the apostles, it involves the evangelists, it involves the shepherds and teachers: all are part of the work of the ministry coming from a heavenly One, do you think, with a view to the unity of the Spirit, the unity of the faith, the knowledge of the Son of God, and the result will be that, perhaps in some small way, Christ will be seen here in the bodies of those who love Him for God’s pleasure?

JL That presents it most attractively. I think too the section here includes the thought that the present exercises of discipline and grief and sorrow passed through according to God’s wonderful ways all contribute to this glorious end for Himself. “We do know that all things work together for good to those who love God”. Some of these things may be very trying meantime, but the love of God lies behind all and His assured purpose at the basis of all His operations.

RDP I remember preaching once from that scripture, “All things work together for good to those that love God”. An old brother took me aside after the preaching: he said ‘You must complete it’ – it says “to those who are called according to purpose”. Things do not work together for the sinful man for good, but to those who are called according to purpose.

HTF Do you think that we do know? Where we began to read “we do know”: from the context it is more about formation, a cumulative formation rather than knowledge. It would not exclude knowledge but there is a substantiality to it, do you think?

JL Yes, and I think there is a lot too, and we were saying a little about this in private conversation before the meeting, that we do know and cling to, but a process of it being worked out often very greatly tests us, and we feel for some of our brethren who are going through present sorrows and griefs at the moment, and they too would know that these things according to God’s mind work out for such blessing, but it calls for patience and much grace and endurance in the process of this glorious end being arrived at, does it not?

PM Could you say please why it is “conformed to the image of his Son”?

JL I would like help myself about that expression. I was pondering over it a little and wondering what all might be involved, but at least I can say I had this thought that it would be some representation of what yields delight to God, so that all that God beholds will represent in some way features of Christ that His heart can delight in; but can you please add to it?

PM Does it link with what the apostle says that when He comes He shall be “wondered at in all that have believed”, (2 Thess 1: 10), that there is a full and complete representation of what has come out in Christ?

JL Yes, I do think that is right. What a wonderful answer there will be then in coming glory bearing its own witness to the triumph of divine workmanship, that God has brought about a full representation of all that delights His heart in Christ, the One who men sought to get rid of and crucified. It will be a triumph over all that came in by way of evil, will it not, that God will have a full representation of that blessed Man to delight His heart eternally?

DCB So is that what is in view in “so that he should be the firstborn among many brethren”? We are not to be conformed for our own sakes exactly: we are to be conformed for His sake, so that He has a

suitable company and He has a fresh glory surrounding Him, a company that would entirely conform to Him.

JL Yes, that is very good. It is not only in that respect that we shall be brought into conformity to the image of God's own Son but that He, while finding all that suits Himself in everyone will at the same time have the place of supremacy in glory among them all. That is a marvellous thought. I almost hesitate to use language that is too common or degraded but it is not the idea of some mass production, but there is distinctive workmanship in each and Christ supreme among His own.

RWMcC Again, it is not robotic either, is it?

JL It never could be. Life and love lie below all this: perhaps I should say love and life. Love is really the heart of it all, is it not, springing from God's own affection? Why else should we be predestinated were it not for the surpassing sovereign activities of divine love?

RJG That is Corinthians, "such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones", 1 Cor 15: 48. Does that link with your thought?

JL It does very much; that is a good link, thank you. That would bear on the thought of the image. There will be a representation of heavenly character seen in the saints corresponding to all that came out in such full perfection in that blessed heavenly Man.

RDP Romans is essentially to the individual really but Christ in totality could not be seen in one person; it would take every believing saint.

JL That is essential.

RDP So it comes into Ephesians when you start to get the company. This is where it begins, does it not? This is the truth set out in what God had in His heart in the preaching of the glad tidings.

JL I think what you say is very interesting. I feel happy to confirm that it could never be secured in any one individual, but equally true it could not be secured without each individual, and that will be part of the triumph of God's operations that there will not be one single vessel, we may say, left out of the completion of all His marvellous

ways according to His predestination and purpose in love, would you say?

Have you got something to say about these steps: called, justified, glorified?

RWMcC I am glad to get help: what you have in mind is sequence to them, is that right?

JL It springs first of all, from being predestinated, which takes it clearly back to God's own sovereign purpose in love, does not it? But then we were entirely in the darkness and out of keeping morally with all that God was looking for; so in comes the thought of His calling. We should be awakened and then this moral step taken to bring us into suitability through justification, discharging every liability that would have brought out a hindering element to this proper representation of Christ in the saints. Every hindering element has been removed, has it not?

AM I was just pondering the fact that the apostle takes these details. There are many things he could have said, could he not? He could have said 'reconciled' for instance, but he takes these matters; called, justified and glorified. Is it that they should be seen: that which entirely speaks of Christ for God?

JL In a way it is entirely morally right. I just think it is a very precious thing that despite all that Satan brought in to frustrate the designs of God's love there will be a perfect evidence of the total triumph of God in Christ over every opposing element. The saints before Him without a charge against them, brought into conformity to the image of His Son and glorified in perfect suitability to be before God eternally and Christ supreme among them. What a marvellous triumph!

KJM Is a difference between the children of flesh and the children of promise in the next chapter? I wonder whether these steps that you speak of could only be true of the children of promise.

JL Yes, I am sure that is right. What can we say but give God thanks for that? We had no way of electing ourselves into that: it is because we have been predestinated: foreknown and

predestinated. That is because of God's actions bringing us into that area of sovereign blessing, is it not?

RDP Initially we may come into blessing as a result of real deep conviction of sin and conscious of the need of a Saviour - thank God for that - and we find that in Christ, but Mr Darby speaks in his poem about another call. He speaks about an earlier call that drew him from sin, but he says, 'In other accents now ...'. Do you think 'calling' is a kind of mature thought in the believer, linking not only with the relief of salvation but the sense of what is for God?

JL Yes; it would be my impression that the calling here is distinctive and specific, and not like the universal outgoings of grace in the glad tidings, which in one sense would be a calling of God alerting men to all that is in God's heart in providing opportunity as a consequence of the work of Christ for all to come into blessing, but this is very specific to those predestinated. It shows how God has operated with each to awaken, just as Abraham so specifically was awakened by the calling of God, calling him out from his kindred and land. It would be something very specific, that we are brought into the understanding of and appreciation of, were you thinking?

RDP Yes. In Mr Darby's *The Call*, we have the hymn in the book but go back to the poem, he speaks about a voice that had earlier called, and then he goes on to what we have in our hymn book:

Blest Lord, Thou spakest! 'twas Thy voice
That led our hearts to Thee;
That drew us to that better choice
(Hymn 47).

Then he speaks about another call which, 'Calls me from earth apart'. I wondered if there is a certain growth of maturity in the believer's appreciation of God's dealings with him in relation to the call here.

JL Yes, I think all that is very interesting. Some of these early brethren seem to have a very great appreciation of that. Mr Stoney speaks about the calling connecting with the race from earth to heaven, calling us apart out of this scene in our affections and interests altogether to another world where Christ is the Centre, vol 3

p143. There is something very gripping, if that is a suitable word, about that distinctive call, is there not?

RDP I think so. If the brethren go back to Mr Darby's poem, he says,

Thy word; but now Thyself ...

as if there is an onward further step in relation to the believer's course down here. If the brethren go to the poem 'The Call', he sets it out really.

JL Yes, these touches are very interesting, embracing necessarily the value of the work of the Lord Jesus, but bringing us by the divine calling to the appreciation of the Person Himself, learning of God's pleasure to bring us into conformity to the image of His Son. There is something supremely blessed about that.

JB And God said to Abraham, "to the land that I will shew thee", Gen 12: 1. Was it not blessed that God's purpose and God's ways with him were exactly as what God was going to show him?

JL Yes, very good: he responded to that call and it is important too that we have some appreciation of it. Our brother here has been referring to Mr Darby's evident appreciation of that call, and his growing appreciation of it. Abraham and many others are outstanding examples of those who moved in response to the divine call, but part of my exercise today is that we might just appreciate the blessedness of it, and God's purpose lying behind it, to bring us into conformity to the image of His Son for God's own delight.

HTF In connection with the call the allusion to Abraham is important, because I was thinking of this reference, 'calls me from earth apart'. It is remarkable, is it not; that God specifically spelled out to Abraham, "Lift up now thine eyes" (Gen 13: 14) so that in the Old Testament this was what was set before the patriarch, who is the father of us all, Rom 4: 12.

JL Yes, Abraham regarded it with deep interest. It was a major step in his life to leave his country and leave his kindred, leave his people. I think Mr James Taylor uses three different expressions in that. He said men might criticise him for being unpatriotic (vol 5 p8),

anti-social and unnatural but Abraham in effect said, 'No, the call of God has gripped my soul: I must move'. It is a fine thing to have an appreciation of the blessedness of the heavenly calling.

RWMcC Is the calling something we can resist or not?

JL It might be. In some way we might attempt to do so, but if the suggestion is that it could defy the purpose of God, I have to say that is impossible: so it may be it is not sufficiently appreciated by us at the start, and sufficiently responded to, but you ask me a difficult question because God cannot be defeated and He will work with us in view of His end being reached and He will not be defied about that, will He? I think as we get some impression of it, it surely begins to mean something vital in our souls, leading to appreciation of the work of Christ enabling us to be justified, set up in righteousness before God and glorified, which I suppose is a consequence of divine operations but with the added thought of the gift of the Holy Spirit too, glorified by such a gift.

DAB Mr Coates describes 'foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified!' as 'a golden chain reaching from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, and between the two dipping down' into time (The Believer Established (vol 15) p11); as you might say, that it is unchangeable. The purposes of God cannot be affected by time here.

JL Yes, that is very good. That just confirms my thought, and shows how God will work despite, we may say, the poverty of the material, but God will ensure that there is an answer suited to Himself.

DCB Would you say something about the fact that "these also he has glorified"?

JL In my own mind I think it reflects two different things: the excellence of divine workmanship but also the gift of the Holy Spirit. The saints have been glorified through that, and by that means God has put the spirit of sonship into our hearts. What a wonderful glorious position to be brought into but is there more to it than that?

DCB I wondered if that related to sonship. We see the way in which the Lord says, "the glory thou hast given me I have given them" (John 17: 22), which has a strong relationship to sonship, but then

the Spirit's power making the spirit of adoption active in our hearts, Rom 8: 15.

JL Yes, very good.

Perhaps we should move on to the passage in Philippians. I rather connected the thought there with the wonderful final action of the Lord in power, transforming our bodies. We are awaiting "the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour". It is an act of Christ as Saviour to bring about this transformation of our bodies, so that even in regard of the bodies of the saints there will be perfect conformity to His body of glory, and in that an answer for God's delight as well.

RWMcC That will be another irresistible call.

JL Yes. I think we probably wisely would refer to 1 Corinthians 15 in that respect. I am quoting now from verse 53: "For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality". That belongs to God alone but by His operations we are brought into the good of that: immortality: "But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word written: Death has been swallowed up in victory", v 54. It is a marvellous witness to the triumphant work of the Saviour, bringing about this complete overthrow of every attempt of Satan to disrupt God's proposals in love and secure an answer in saints, even as to their bodies, conformed "to his body of glory".

AM There can be no greater contrast than our body of humiliation and His body of glory, can there?

JL Many of the saints are feeling that, and to some extent we all do, and perhaps become a little more aware of it too as we grow older, though not necessarily on account of age; but we do feel we are in bodies of humiliation. What a wonderful prospect - bodies of glory. I read a remark of Mr Darby's once that somewhat arrested me. He said in regard of his present body, 'What a hut I am in', comparing it with the house from heaven (Collected Writings vol 16 p397): it will be such a transformation. It was just the language he felt free to use at that juncture but it left an impression with me as if he was just

thinking of a wonderful transformation, awaiting a house from heaven.

PM We have been reminded in the last week that even a babe has a body of humiliation. It does not await old age to have a body of humiliation; it is that order of man, but that was never so with Jesus.

JL No. Just so, it never was so: that body could not see corruption. He went into death, His own marvellous act in love, but these bodies of ours may well see corruption yet, and in any case they are bodies of humiliation, and there is to be a wonderful change brought about.

PM Death will never apply to that body of glory.

JL It could not possibly.

PM He lives in “power of an indissoluble life”, Heb 7: 16. What a Person He is.

JL Very good.

RDP One of the ways by which the devil thought he could thwart the work of God in Job was if he could touch Job in his body. I suppose we have to learn lessons, however committed, however bright we are. However your thought is that sometimes the fact of the body and its breakdown and its humiliation might look as if it gives the enemy an opportunity to overthrow God’s work, but He is going to change that body. It will never do, will it, but Satan’s challenge was against the body of Job?

JL I think the scripture is very interesting in that regard. We have seen, not the end of Job: maybe that is what Satan was hoping to accomplish to bring all Job’s thoughts and life and work to an end, but we have “seen the end of the Lord” (Jas 5: 11), the wonderful triumph of God’s workmanship - preserving through those awful trials that he passed through - a vessel for His own pleasure: one coming out with priestly grace, still at the end enriched and so blessed of God: what a marvellous victory!

HTF Thus “humiliation” is a purposeful word, is it not? It is intended to have a humbling consequence, do you think? We regret that; then it helps us in the acceptance. It is easy to say that, but it

actually does have that intention. God has that intention in the present condition, do you think?

JL I think that. Do you think part of the effect of that is to increase the longing with us for the coming bodies of glory, to make us long for the appearing of the Saviour? We are not looking for continued blessing in that respect down here on this earth, "our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens". Our true life is in association with Christ above, is it not, the Spirit giving us a present foretaste of what our true commonwealth is?

PM Is the service of the Spirit currently in quickening to give us a foretaste of what will actually be?

JL Well, I do think that, but say more please about how that actually operates because we still are in these bodies of humiliation, are we not?

PM I do not know that I could say very much about it at all, but do we not prove, perhaps in the divine presence and in contemplation, the quickening of our affections, and even sometimes you feel it in your body, that the Spirit is moving you in relation to the Man who is the object of the Father's affections?

JL So we sometimes use on that account these two different words which I think I used in the previous reading, the actuality we await, but the reality we enjoy now by the Spirit, and that is our present situation, is it not? These real and living touches are communicated by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, but the actuality of what we have to enter into we still await from the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. I would like to just know what the brethren think about the use of the word Saviour there. What is your understanding of that?

DCB I think it is my father-in-law I quote saying that Christ's last act of saviourhood is the transformation of our bodies.

JL What a wonderful action it will be. It will be an action of power; it will be a triumphant victory over every opposing thing that the enemy has brought in. Sin has deformed bodies: that is very evident all around us, all the effects of sin and bringing in death, but what a wonderful evidence of the triumphant victory of the Lord Jesus Christ

finally as Saviour, even to the transforming of these bodies of the saints.

DCB I was wondering about the reference in 2 Corinthians, “For we know that if our earthly tabernacle house be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”, chap 5: 1. We are associated, are we not, with that body that will be provided which is entirely heavenly in origin and entirely suitable to that place?

JL That is new creation workmanship, is it? The bodies we have now are connected with the old creation, but this body we await forms part of God’s work in new creation, does it?

DCB Yes.

JL These will be bodies made suitable for the eternal state of things. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s kingdom” (1 Cor 15: 50): bodies of flesh and blood are not furnished with the capability of enduring eternally in the blessedness of all that God has proposed, but our bodies of glory from God are able for that, “eternal in the heavens”. That will be one of the blessed consequences of what will yet be accomplished by Christ in transforming power,

RSH The preceding verse to the one you have just quoted in Corinthians is, “as we have borne the image of one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one”, 1 Cor 15: 49. Would the thought of “the heavenly one” link with this body of glory?

JL I am sure it does.

RSH What is not of this earth is heavenly?

JL It is a marvellous answer for God for the saints to be transformed into heavenly character, even as to the bodies of those that He will have before Him.

RWMcC Elsewhere the apostle speaks of it as a mystery, does he not? He says, “We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed”, 1 Cor 15: 51.

JL In what respect is it a mystery if he outlines what is to happen?

RWMcC Well, you can help us with that. It certainly is God's action, is it not? It is the power with which He raised the Christ from the dead: I would like help.

JL I am just enquiring. It is clearly nothing common with man's operations or activities or anything that belongs to this earth. In that respect, it is a mystery: it is something that is essentially from God. As was quoted a moment or two ago about the character of these bodies: they are heavenly, and there is no public evidence of them as yet. We are not going around with glorified bodies now: in that respect it is all a mystery but we have the positive assurance of the blessed reality of what is to come.

HTF We are not in conditions where we can understand that, but that is where faith is needed. Does that link to the mystery?

JL Yes; faith is essential meantime. We cling to these things, I am sure, and it is intended that we should do so in the midst of a world that is really collapsing all around us. What confidence it puts into the affections of the saints; what an uplift to our hearts as we see things deteriorating and going down hill. The whole world system is on the brink of collapse. How we have this wonderful assured mystery treasured in our souls!

JB We come into the gain of it as we are subdued. Philippians 3 ends with the Lord subduing "all things to himself". The light comes to those who submit to the Lord Jesus as Lord, do you think?

JL Yes; that is a very good thought. He has power to bring that about, but it would be a feature that is worked out suitably amongst saints at the present time, and not just a final abrupt intervention but something the subduing effect of which would be proceeding now, which Christ will bring to finality shortly as Saviour.

I thought in John's epistle that there is a beautiful link with the Father's love: "See what love the Father has given to us". There is an element of mystery connected with these things but John says, "See": "See what love the Father has given to us". That would be in the eyes of our hearts, and by the Spirit's help, that we are able to see these things, would you say?

RWMcC Yes, I think so. Do you think the Spirit's hand would be in that?

JL Yes, surely, giving us to understand the immense privilege of being brought into the divine family. I am sure we have all noted before that the reference to children here is not a diminutive term, but is a reference really to the blessed relationship of being amongst the children of God.

PM Does the thought of "the children of God" involve character? They take after God Himself morally. Would that be right?

JL Yes, identified thereby; there are other reasons given, but they are identified thereby as being the children of God, because they are different in character: the family characteristics are completely different from what would mark a worldly family or something else that did not have its roots in the love of God. But "now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him".

RDP This is something that the world does not understand: it says here, "For this reason the world knows us not, because it knew him not." John says, "He was in the world ... and the world knew Him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not", John 1: 10, 11. There is a level of life which the world does not see, and it is a very affecting thing that this is something that can be known now, touched now by His Spirit.

JL In some way I think the world will ultimately see. The Lord Jesus makes reference to that in John 17, and I suppose the answer to that in some way will be when the heavenly city comes down, rendering witness to the world of divine workmanship, "having the glory of God", Rev 21: 11. There will be something manifest then showing that the saints have been brought into conformity with the glorious conditions suited to God's own mind, like Christ, coming down in all the heavenly excellence at that point. Would that be right?

RDP 2 Thessalonians says, "when he shall have come to be glorified in his saints and wondered at in all that have believed", chap 1: 10. Christ will be seen in that world to come, and it will be manifested in those who believe. These are very precious things,

are they not? There is an area of things that as far as the present time is concerned, the world does not see, it does not see the things of the Spirit, but when it does see, what it will see is Christ.

JL “I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me”, John 17: 23. There will yet be that remarkable witness come forth from God. I somewhat connect it in my own mind with the coming down of the holy city with its outgoing testimony to what God has wrought in the shining of His own workmanship. Would that be right?

RDP These are very precious things, but there is still much that we do not know, such as how it will be, do we? But you are thankful for these scriptures that say it will be, and this is part of the believer’s hope, is it not?

JL Yes; we know that it shall be, “for we shall see him as he is”. And then there is this present exercise. That was part of my reason for reading this scripture, “every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as *he* is pure”. We were noticing in Philippians what the Lord Himself as Saviour will bring about through an act of power, but this is something brought about through present exercise in the souls of the saints.

PM The reference in Colossians 3 is to the fact that “your life is hid with the Christ in God. When the Christ is manifested who is our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory”, v 3, 4. That brings in the two sides, of what is hidden now that will be manifested then.

JL That helps, thank you, yes. And meantime, this exercise, is left with us in a practical way to work out. Final conformity will clearly be brought about, but steps towards moral conformity should be progressing now, should they?

RWMcC Yes, I was just reflecting that John presents things in black and white, does he not? “Every one that has this hope in him purifies himself”: there are no grey areas, are there? I might find in myself that I may feel I am not very conformed to this but that is the exercise raised. That is your exercise too that it should be so.

JL I am saying it should be so. Perhaps if John was here he would say everyone who has this hope is doing so. That is the black and white difference, is it?

RDP Abraham did not have the law; he went out under divine command and impulse. At one point it says, "this did not Abraham", (John 8: 40), but there was no law or book that told him certain things he should not do. What filled his heart was that he was looking for "the city that has foundations" (Heb 11: 10), and it made certain things incongruous to him as far as this world was concerned.

JL Yes, that is an interesting reference, showing that the fruit of the calling and the hope he enjoyed as a consequence had given him desires that sought after what was entirely acceptable and pleasing to God.

RDP Yes.

JL There were others too, like Moses; he did not want to have part in all the passing world in Egypt, did he? He would rather have a place amongst the people of God because something was operating there that has its end in glory; the end of Egypt was ruin, but the end of God's work among His saints will be glory, will it not?

RDP It says, he saw "him who is invisible", Heb 11: 27.

JL Yes, very good.

RDP To the eye of faith it was there, but it was invisible as far as man was concerned.

JB Is it your exercise as to the first reading that the Lord Jesus becomes my true Object, and then that as He is my Object I see Him as He is? So that we shall be like Him, in conformity to Him, not only now, but spiritually now?

JL Yes, that in a way summarises my exercise. I was thinking in the first reading of all these several steps with their progressive thought in having Christ as my Object so that I might be preserved in every way in my affections, and increasingly drawn out towards Him, and I was thinking about all that was necessary for our preservation. But my thought in this reading was that, in a special way, this is for God's

delight. It will clearly be our delight as well, but it is especially in view of God's own pleasure that He should have a whole universe reflecting Christ, and the saints who compose it bearing His image. What a wonderful answer for God's delight! And Christ in His final triumphant action of power as Saviour of the body will transform these bodies of humiliation to ensure that that delight for God is brought about, even to our bodies. That is a marvellous thing!

HTF "Not that I have already obtained the prize, ... but I pursue" (Phil 3: 12); is that a similar thought to this?

JL Yes, and in this respect too, how would you pursue? John would be saying, 'As you pursue you should be exercised to be as He is'. We would not just gaily pursue our path in this world and make the best of things; it would be pursuing with definite exercise of soul to seek to be more like Christ day by day.

Grimsby

9th June 2018

Key to Initials:

D A Barlow, Sunbury; D C Brown, Edinburgh; H T Franklin, Grimsby;
R S Hutson, Bedford; J B Ikin, Manchester; J Laurie, Brechin; A
Martin, Buckhurst Hill; K J May, Maidstone; P Martin, Colchester; R J
Gray, East Finchley, R W McClean, Grimsby; R D Plant, Birmingham

“*HE* SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS”

Stephen Speirs

Matthew 1: 21

Luke 5: 27-32

2 Corinthians 5: 21

Romans 8: 1-6, 14

I seek help, dear friends, to speak a little as to this One that we have in Matthew as the Saviour of sinners: “for *he* shall save his people from their sins”. Romans tells us that we are all sinners: “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”, chap 3: 23. The man in the world would tell you that is not a popular thing to say today, to speak of someone as a sinner, but Scripture tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; that is you, me and everyone alive in this world today; we come short of the glory of God. Sin has brought about distance between God and His creature, but God desires, not that there should be distance, *but* that there should be nearness. God is holy, righteous and abhors sin. Sin has no place in the presence of God but such is the heart of God, and the love of God, that He desires you in His presence. How is that so? If we have come short, how do we come near?

Well, that is why I began in Matthew 1: “for *he* shall save his people from their sins”. This blessed One came to save you and me, needy sinners, from our sins that we might know that blessing that God has in mind for every one that puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. That is God's glad tidings. It is good news for all mankind; those who are sinners can be saved from their sins, and in knowing that their sins are forgiven can know blessing that will not only last for time but for eternity. Such is the greatness and fulness of what Christ has done to save His people from their sins! He is able to save everyone who comes in simple repentance. It is all in this One; it is in no other. That is why we draw attention to this blessed One, “thou shalt call his name Jesus, for *he*” - the emphasis is on “*he*”. He is the only One that can save us from our sins on account of who

He is and what He has done. He is the blessed Son of God, God in His Person, who by His own hand, by His word, created this earth in which we live, and who gives the soul life.

God came into His creation in Jesus in order that He might draw near to man: that He might draw near to you and me. That is what this first chapter of Matthew speaks of, it is the incoming of Jesus: One so great coming here as a Babe, so lowly, so helpless, you might say, but yet think of what was there in that blessed One. That was the incarnation, a divine Person coming into manhood in order that He might carry out the will of God, and that required Him laying down His life as a sacrifice for sin and going into death. It speaks here of that blessed One coming into manhood, and how He was seen here amongst men doing good. Here was one Man who walked on this earth in whom sin had no part; sin had no claim on Him. Every step of His way was perfect and in accordance with the will of His God and Father. Here was a Man whom God had His delight in. Scripture tells us of the heavens being opened, "*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight", Matt. 17: 5. God was delighted with this blessed Man on earth, walking according to the thoughts God had for man.

Think of the day-by-day communion, Jesus doing what was right, doing what was according to the will of His Father, and how that involved the blessing of man; He brought in healing, He brought sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and life to those that had died. Think of the power that was in that blessed One and how it was for the good of those that He came into contact with! But, think of the awfulness of the heart of man as under the effect of sin. They did not want this Man; they cried, "Away with this man", Luke 23:18. That is the awfulness of the heart of man as under the effect of sin. That is your heart and my heart. Not only was He rejected of men but if the question of sin was to be dealt with, then it required that He lay down His life as a sacrifice.

We read in the scripture in Luke about His people. These are the people that He came to save; sinners like you and me. There were those at the time who questioned why He was eating with tax

gatherers and sinners. The Lord Jesus is available to *all* who approach; whatever their state, however bad or however awful their sins are, the Lord Jesus is able and willing to save all those who approach Him. The Lord was found here amongst those who would turn to that Him, those who knew that the power for salvation was in Him. Do you know this One; Jesus? Do you know who He is?

We have spoken earlier as to Him as the Son of God, One so great and yet a Man, and God's will required that He go into death. That was no ordinary death, speaking very carefully, but He was taken by cruel men of the time, those who rejected Him, and they nailed Him to a cross. That was the portion of a criminal, a murderer, not the portion of One who was the Creator of the earth, and yet that was the portion given to Him by men. What sufferings the Lord Jesus endured at the hands of man. And then we think of those three hours of darkness as He hung on the cross, when He suffered at the hands of God, involving the next scripture we read that "he was made sin for us". The thing that was abhorrent to God, Jesus was made in order that God could pour out His judgment on that blessed One. He had known communion all His days here, every step of the way perfect according to the will of His God and Father, but in those three hours that communion was broken and God made Him to be sin for us, and God poured out His judgment on the head of that blessed One. That is the judgment that is due to you and me as sinners; as under the effect of sin that is what is due to us. Death is the portion of those that are sinners but the Lord Jesus suffered there in our stead. Can you say that He suffered in your stead? Do you own that for yourself that that blessed One went that way for you? That is how we are saved from our sins, by simply believing and trusting that Jesus died for us and shed His precious blood. The Lord Jesus died, and then the soldier came and pierced His side! That precious blood flowed forth as a witness to what was completed there on the cross. The magnitude of it! What was completed there was to the full satisfaction of God. Do you have an appreciation of that? Do you know what it is to come under the shelter of that blood, to know that it was shed for you? Well, it is

available to all who come in repentance. That is your way into it; accept that you are a sinner before a holy and righteous God, but then avail yourself of the One that has laid down His life as a sacrifice for sin, the Lord Jesus. He is the One who has suffered and has died in order that we might go free. What freedom, what liberty there is to those that believe in the Lord Jesus. There is no more question of your sins being brought up; they are no more to be remembered. What joy and peace to the soul to know that the question of your sins, which stood between you and God, has been dealt with completely, and you can be assured of an eternity with Christ on account of putting your faith and trust in that blessed One and the work He has done. There is nothing for us to do. Christ has done it all! Simply put your faith and trust in Him and own Him, own the greatness and fulness of His work for yourself and you can enter into the blessing, the forgiveness of sins and the joy and peace that brings to the soul. It will stand not only for time but for eternity.

These things are so great, so important. Do not treat them lightly, because they concern your eternal salvation. The portion of those that have heard the glad tidings of what Christ has done and reject it will be an eternity without Christ in the lake of fire. Do not be among those who have rejected Christ but rather be among those who own Him as Lord and are looking for that day when He will come for them.

He is no longer in death. We spoke of His death on the cross, and He was taken from there and laid in the grave for three days and three nights, but such was the completeness and greatness of what He did that God was pleased to raise Him from the grave. There is testimony in the Scriptures as to those who walked with Him and conversed with Him after his resurrection. But then they saw Him ascending on high, and He has been given a seat at the Father's right hand where He is glorified, a place He is worthy of on account of what He has done and on account of who He is. He has broken the power of death, and come out victorious; He is risen, ascended and glorified, and from there we can present Him as a living Saviour. He is coming again for those that have put their faith and trust in

Him. That is the hope of the believer; it is a living hope, not a hope that may come or may not, but a living hope, one that is sure, and we are looking forward to that day when He will come to take us to be with Himself, and then we shall be forever with Him. What a blessed portion for those who believe. I commend Him to you that you might know that portion too.

The next scripture came to me as an impression of the greatness of what was undertaken : “Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him”. He was “made sin for us”; nothing on His own account: He was perfect, sin apart. God had full delight in that blessed One. Death had no claim on Him. There was no such claim on One who was sin apart, but, He suffered and went into death for us: he has been “made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him”. Think of what is seen in the saints as a result of the work of Christ. It is a testament to the greatness of the work of Christ that everyone who approaches, everyone who comes to Christ, can enjoy the portion prepared for those that believe. Does it not affect your heart that One so great went this way “for us”, as it says in this scripture? Nothing in me was perfect; there is nothing in me that merited this blessing, but He chose to go that way for His own. Let that affect your heart so that it draws you to Him, and so that you come in repentance and own your nothingness before God, and realise that there is nothing in yourself that can appease God and His judgment of sin and sins. It is in that blessed One, that we can know the fulness and the greatness of the blessings that God has in mind. Simply accept Christ as your Saviour, put your faith and trust in Him and His finished work, and you can be counted amongst those that are before God who have been cleared of the matter of sin.

The last passage of scripture in Romans is well known, “There is then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus”. Such is the greatness and the fulness of the work of Christ that you can stand before God in all the worth of Him, and know your place as a son before God. That is what we have in verse 14: “for as many as are

led by the Spirit of God, *these* are sons of God". Christianity and believing in the Lord Jesus brings you not only into forgiveness of your sins, but you are set up among the sons of God. Think of the dignity of that! What there is for us to enjoy; what we touch in the service of God of having access to the Father's presence and knowing the liberty of sonship! What it is to be clothed in the best robe, and given the liberty of the Father's house and experience of that love and nearness, the distance having been all removed. The question of sin is nowhere to be seen; it has been dealt with fully and there is no question of limitation; Christ has secured this place for us.

This passage goes on to say, "For they that are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh;" - that would be us if we yield to what is of and after our fallen nature - "and they that are according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit". The blessed Holy Spirit is a Gift given from God to those that believe, to those that obey. The blessed Holy Spirit is not just - and I speak carefully - an influence for good; He is a divine Person. It is God in a Person indwelling the believer. This is available to everyone that believes, is obedient and asks the Father for the Spirit. He will be with us and in us for ever, but His service to us now in the time that remains to us is to help us in these things, and help us in our walk here. While we are still here in flesh and blood we have to go out and meet righteousness, we have to go out into the wilderness, as we speak of it, and walk amongst men, but the Spirit would help us in that, help us to walk here as those who are here for the divine pleasure, separate from what is around, waiting for the Lord's soon return. What power there is for this in the Spirit! This is what God has in mind for those that know Christ as their Saviour and who have the Holy Spirit: life and peace. Christianity is concerned with life not with death. The penalty of sin is death, but, what God offers in the glad tidings is life; life eternal that can be known and enjoyed now in the power of the Spirit. It is life secured by and centred in that blessed One, the blessed Son of God, the Lord Jesus.

My simple thought in reading these scriptures was that we may accept first that we are sinners before God; but, as owning that, come to know the One who came to save His people from their sins. God has condemned sin in the flesh, but Jesus is available to the sinner. All those who are under the effect of sin can come to Him and know Him as Saviour and join the myriads that have already done so. May we be amongst those too, who have availed themselves of the gift of the Holy Spirit and are here walking pleasing to that blessed One, looking for His soon return. How soon it will be! Let us be looking for His return when we shall be taken to be with Him forever and enjoy what is our eternal portion.

May it be so, for His Name's sake.

Edinburgh
2nd April 2017

WHAT IS PRECIOUS

Alan D Munro

Psalm 116: 15

1 Peter 2: 4-7

It will be very obvious from these two scriptures that I would like to speak about what is precious. Our brother preaching here a week past Lord's day read this psalm. Our sister had been taken the day before, and this laid hold of my spirit, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints". The Lord Jesus is interested in everyone. He is interested in all humanity, believers or unbelievers, but He has a special interest in those who put their trust in Him and avail themselves of His precious finished work. Our dear sister knew the value of that work accomplished two thousand years ago, that precious shed blood. Early in her life she came to know Him as her Saviour and now that He has put her to sleep, this verse comes with great comfort to us all, but especially to the family and those who cared for our sister when she was in the home. We are so thankful for these things, these are a divine provision. The Christian dispensation is a dispensation of care and love and respect, and our dear sister had showed these things in her long life. Sadly, at the end of it, weakness came in and frailty of mind and body; the Lord is aware of all these things and He ministered to her in His own special way.

I thought that these are scriptures to lay hold of, because what has happened and what is happening today is being taken account of in heaven. As our brother has said, we are looking on to the time of the rapture, when all those who have fallen asleep in Jesus will be raised. It will be a great day of triumph, but the present time is one when we need to be definite; we need to continue. I thought of this simple scripture in Peter. Peter was one of the apostles; he was a man who companied with Jesus here; he knew Him well. Peter said, "being with him on the holy mountain", 2 Pet 1: 18. He also said, "to them that have received like precious faith", 2 Pet 1: 1. The faith that Peter had was the same faith that our sister had, and it is the same faith that I trust all of us in this room have; it is available to us all.

The precious shed blood of Jesus is available for the guilty sinner, but more than that, it is available to give us access to the presence of God and to give us assurance, to give us conviction and to give us certainty. We had an impression as to that yesterday, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come", Heb 13: 8. When I turned the calendar over this morning there was the reference to "the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land", Isa 32: 2. Our sister knew that, I know it, and there is no reason why everyone here should not know it. The work has been done by Jesus, His precious blood has been shed, divine rights have been upheld. God's righteousness, His holiness, His forgiveness are all available because of the precious work of Jesus.

That is why I read in Peter: "To whom coming, a living stone". Jesus is the living Stone. He is *the* living Stone, but as we avail ourselves of His redemptive work, we come in as living stones. We are attracted to Him. The great principle of magnetism works in the hearts of believers who have come to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ. We are drawn to Him and we are not only drawn but we are held, and the closer we are to Him the more we appreciate His preciousness and the value of what He has done. As you read through this section, it is marvellous how many times what is precious comes in; "a corner stone, elect, precious". Jesus was rejected in this world, He was crucified and cast out, but His disposition never changed. His attitude towards humanity is still the same: it is one of forgiveness, it is one of love, it is one of care and it is one of kindness. Our dear sister proved that in her life and there is no reason why every one of us should not prove it. Then, "To you therefore who believe is the preciousness".

I leave these simple impressions, and I trust they are clear and comforting. May the Lord bless the word.

Grangemouth

12th February 2018

(At the meeting for the burial of Miss L Ashton)

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

John C Gray

Philippians 3: 9-11

These matters that Paul writes to the dear saints at Philippi are very telling. First of all, righteousness “which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God” is the basis on which every believer has access to Christ and to God: how wonderful that is. As we sang in our hymn (Hymn 375), through the shedding of the blood of Christ we have a ready way through - through the grace and love of God. That is a matter for all of us to lay hold of because the righteousness of God has been revealed at the cross and the power of resurrection, as it speaks of here, is the witness that God is satisfied with what has been done. Our sister was in the light of all that. It is a wonderful thing that through what has come by the righteousness of God revealed we have a settled, peaceful condition in our souls forever, and that is very reassuring. Our sister had that.

I draw attention particularly to these three things, “to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings”. First of all, “to know him”, that we might be “growing by the true knowledge of God”, Col 1: 10. The true knowledge of God is learned through our relationships with Jesus Christ. He has come into manhood that we might *know* Him. He is God, Jesus Christ the Son of God, He is God Himself, and so we know God through Him . “He is the true God and eternal life”, John says in 1 John 5: 20. We should know Him, and the question is, ‘How do we know Him, and do we know Him well enough?’. Our sister knew Him for many long years. How wonderful it is to take account of, and it is an important matter for us that we should have relationships with the Lord Jesus so that we can know who He is, not only in the way of our salvation but in relation to our present circumstances that He draws near and brings in the comfort and the help that is needed in every stage. We may have difficulties, we may have worries and we may have problems but to know Him is a reassurance. It is like a rock, it is a place of anchor in which we can place our confidence forever.

This matter of “the power of His resurrection”, which our brother referred to in His prayer, is a great matter: the resurrection of Christ. There was the precious body of the Lord Jesus lying in that sepulchre, and you might wonder what is going to happen, and suddenly He rises from death. “It was not possible that he should be held by its power”, the scripture says (Acts 2: 24); He could not be held by the power of death. He rose from among the dead and the Father was involved in it, “Christ has been raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father”, Rom 6: 4. You think of the quickening power of divine Persons operating in relation to that body: what a wonderful thing it was. If God can raise one Person, if the Lord Jesus can rise from the dead, believers who are trusting in Him will be raised from the dead. So in “the power of his resurrection”, there will be thousands, millions of persons who will rise from the dead at the first resurrection to be with Christ. The two resurrections are well known to most here. The first one will be to life, the second one to judgment after the reign of Christ for one thousand years, but the first one is the one in which we will have a part as believing in the Lord Jesus.

How fine to be in the light of the power of His resurrection. Think of persons like Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob whose bodies have been in the grave for thousands of years. You may say, ‘How will God do it?’. We underestimate the power of God. Dear friends, what a thing it is to be in the light of the power of His resurrection, and Paul says, “if any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the dead”. That means that currently he was not only in the light of it, but in the joy of it, and in the quickening power of it, that something had happened in his life which was not natural. It takes everyone above what we were as natural sinful persons, and brings us into new life. It brings us into quickening power. How is that? It is by the power of the Spirit; the power of the Spirit of God brings us into new life, and brings us into that which God has always had in mind, that He should have persons in suitable conditions in His presence. But we are in the joy of that now. We experience that as we gather together, and our gatherings together are important because the Lord Jesus has delight in that, and in the greatness and glory of what the assembly is.

So then it says, “the fellowship of his sufferings”. That is the reproach of the Christ; we have to bear that. The Lord Jesus has been cast out of this world, crucified on the cross, and that is the last that men generally saw of Him. But believers know that something different has taken place, and so we bear the reproach of the Christ. It is a wonderful matter to take account of that. You think of our sister being among the company of the saints in assembly privileges, moving in relation to everything that was precious to God and precious to Him, and so it is a worthy matter that we have “fellowship of his sufferings”. That is, that we understand the feelings that entered into what the Lord went through on the cross when He was faced with the awfulness of being made sin on our account.

May we be encouraged to see that our sister has had a life in which she knew Him “and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death”; that is, she was among the persons who are moving in the light that this world has nothing to offer and that there is a new world, a new and living way. May we be helped and blest in it. For His Name’s sake.

Grangemouth

12th February 2018

(At the meeting for the burial of Miss L Ashton)

CONTENTMENT

John Speirs

1 Peter 1: 18-20 (to “world”); 6-9; 3: 4

One thing I recall about our sister was that she was a contented person. She was marked by quiet contentment. We are in a world that is marked by discontent and dissatisfaction, because persons feel they will not be content until they have something greater in terms of place in the world, or material, silver or gold; and when they do get it they realise that they still want more, that they are dissatisfied and they are discontented. Now our sister, it would appear, did not have any large possessions as far as this world is concerned, or any great place or fame in this world's system, but she was contented. Why was it? What was the secret of her quiet contentment? She had something that was more precious than these things of the world! She had something in her heart that was more precious than all that the world could offer, all the silver and the gold, the fame or the recognition of this poor world - she had a valuation of the precious blood of Jesus.

It is at times like this that God would ask us, individually, ‘What do you value?’. Do you value the things of the world? Or do you value the things that God offers you? The blood of Jesus, do you value that? Our sister valued it. She knew that that was the basis of her peace with God. Nothing else can be that, friend; only the blood of Jesus can give you peace with God. Do you believe it, accept it for yourself? Shelter under it; be restful in your spirit before God, knowing that all your sins are covered by that precious blood shed once at the cross by Jesus. It is precious blood; Peter knew it was precious. Well, is it precious to me? That is the question at a time like this. What do you hold to be precious? Death is a sobering time. It is a time when certain things must be left behind. Natural links are broken; material things are left behind. Why would you put value on things that must be left behind at death? Put value on things that go through into eternity, where your never-dying soul will be forever: will it be with the Lord? Put your faith and trust in the blood of Jesus now and your eternal salvation, like our sister's, will

be secure, and you can have peace with God. That is part of the contentment you can have.

But then, there is precious faith too. It speaks here of various trials, and our sister knew what these things were. She suffered in her body and her mind as our brother has said, but she had faith, and that is precious; it says, "much more precious than of gold which perishes". So that faith in the blood of Jesus initially secured her eternal salvation, but then day by day, week by week, month by month that salvation was proved. And as you realise that God is there for you, to help you through in your circumstances, that the Lord Jesus is living on high to intercede for you, able to sympathise with you in all your infirmity, you find that that faith that you have becomes even more precious to you, because it not only gets you through but it allows you to be occupied with something greater than all this world has to offer: Christ in glory, and He can fill and satisfy your heart like nothing or no-one else can. This world has nothing comparable to offer to the knowledge of Jesus where He is in glory. The deep, personal knowledge of that Person can fill and satisfy every human heart. Does it satisfy yours? I trust that it does.

"Much more precious than of gold which perishes ... be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ". Well, this is more than our need being met. This is something returning to God, "praise and glory and honour", exulting "with joy unspeakable and filled with the glory". Beloved, are you returning something to God? Are you occupied in His praise? Our sister, when she was able, loved to be at the meeting, where God is praised. Is that your desire, is that my desire? Not only to see what blessings we have received from God, but what we can return to Him, in some way, of praise and glory.

Then I just read over the page, because there is not only what is valuable in our sight, that precious blood, and that faith, but then there is what is precious in God's sight. I was thinking of that psalm, "Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints" (Ps 116: 15), but too, this "incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" is precious in the sight of God. The Lord Jesus Himself says, "I am meek and lowly", Matt 11: 29. That, therefore, must be precious to

God. Our sister demonstrated a meek and quiet spirit, I believe, and that is of great price in the eyes of God. Do not be concerned with what is of great price in man's eyes. Be concerned with what is of great price in God's eyes. He sees what you have, He sees what you value and He sees what I value, He sees if I value the blood of Christ, and that would give Him delight and pleasure, to see someone who has recognised and appreciated His well beloved Son, and He recognises if we show in some measure the features of that One, this "meek and quiet spirit".

The work in our sister's soul is now complete. God began that work in our sister which He has completed, and it is going to be for Christ's glory and for God's pleasure eternally; it has been secured. Beloved, let us value the things that God offers and have this quiet contentment that our sister proved. May the Lord bless the word.

Grangemouth

12th February 2018

(At the meeting for the burial of Miss L Ashton)

FRAGMENT

..."Let your requests Be made known unto God. And the peace of God .. . shall keep your hearts and minds," &c. Phil 4: 7 KJV. People often pray about what is pressing on the heart, without getting satisfied and at rest as to it; but when it is so, the fault is in oneself and not in the Lord, and the reason is that one has not simply made it known unto Him. You may ask me how you should make it known? I reply, Any way, but make it known you must, in order to have peace of heart as to it. You might make it known without leaving your chair, or you might be for days before you had the consciousness that you had made it known. A petitioner might be at court several days and yet he might not have got an audience from her Majesty, and until he had the audience he could not make known the substance of his petition. The thing that delays one's peace of heart is that I have not had an audience, that is, I have not the consciousness that I have made known my request. But if I have made it known, I rest, because I know that He knows it. It is not because He is omniscient, but because I have told it to Him. The simple question is, Have you told it to Him? You might be praying for hours, without the consciousness of having really committed it to Him; as a man might be at court for days without seeing the Queen. It depends on the reality of my speaking to Him. In 1 John 5: 14, 15, it depends on Him, on His hearing me, but here (Phil 4), in matters of request, and in order to have the peace of God in the heart as to what presses on it, the great point is that I make it known unto Him.

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