

### What manner of love. 1 John 2. 28-3. 3. Bethesda Evening Praise. 22 June 2014.

Our Bible reading for this evening comes from towards the close of the New Testament, from the first epistle of John, commencing at chapter 2 verse 28.

And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet appeared what we shall be, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

And this evening I want to focus on just three simple points from the opening verses of 1 John 3; namely, **what we are ... what we shall be ... and what we should be.**<sup>1</sup>

It is always helpful when people tell you plainly why they are writing to you. And towards the close of his letter, John supplies us with one of several reasons he had for writing: 'These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God', he says, 'that you may know that you have eternal life'.<sup>2</sup> Clearly then it was the apostle's intention – and, behind him, it was God's intention – that all who know the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Lord should have the assurance of salvation – should have the certainty of possessing eternal life. And to this end John provides his readers with a set of distinguishing evidences and characteristics of those who have experienced the new – the spiritual – birth. These are the birthmarks, if you like, of those who, by faith, have become the children of God.<sup>3</sup>

John's checklist is in fact very short. Following the order in his letter: first, '*everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him*';<sup>4</sup> then, a little later, '*everyone who loves is born of God*';<sup>5</sup> and, finally, (c) '*everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God*'.<sup>6</sup>

We read the first of these.<sup>7</sup> John had earlier spoken of Christians as those who 'have fellowship with God', as those who 'walk in the light', as those who 'know God', as those who 'keep His word', as those who 'abide in the Son and in the Father', and so on.<sup>8</sup> But here – in the closing verse of chapter 2 – is the first time in his letter that John mentions being born of God.<sup>9</sup> And, it seems to me that, as he pens the words 'born of Him', the apostle's heart and soul are overwhelmed – staggered, enthralled – by the splendour – by the grandeur – by the sheer magnificence, of what he has written.

So much so that the apostle is unable to suppress an exclamation of wonder and amazement. 'Behold', he bursts out – 'look at this' – '*what manner of love* the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God'.

Many goods you will find on sale today are made in India, China or Hong Kong – and some people I have come across take great interest in identifying which country their purchases have come from. And, interestingly, the word the apostle John used here (translated 'what manner of') originally meant 'from what country does this come?' The word was employed in John's day to describe anything which was strange and unaccountable. The word isn't found in the Greek Old Testament at all, and, in the New Testament, is sometimes – as here – used to express astonishment. For example, Matthew reports in chapter 8 of his gospel how he and the other apostles had used this very word when our Lord had subdued a great tempest on the Sea of Galilee – they ' marvelled', Matthew recalls, 'saying, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!*'<sup>10</sup>

John is saying then that 'This love the Father has given us is a *most unusual* kind of love – an *extraordinary* love ... it is, in effect, an 'alien' – a 'foreign' – kind of love'. And so it is! For this love did not come from *anywhere*, or from *anyone*, on earth!<sup>11</sup>

John has much to say in his writings about the new-birth. In his gospel, he speaks of the *means* of the new-birth: 'As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus), to them He gave the right (the authority) to become children of God, to those who believe in His name'; so reads John 1. 12. In his gospel, he also stresses the *necessity* of the new-birth: we hear the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, 'Marvel not that I said to you, You must be born again'.<sup>12</sup> But what led John, who recorded Jesus' words to Nicodemus, to marvel was not '*how*' someone can be born again, but '*that*', by God's grace, he and others had been! In his gospel therefore John spoke of both the *means* and the *necessity* of the new-birth. But here in his letter he traces it back to its *source and its spring*: to the Father's amazing love for us.<sup>13</sup>

And I note that, according to John, it is not merely that God has shown or revealed His love to us – which of course He has. It is a love, John says, which He has ‘given’ to us.<sup>14</sup>

I might say to someone who is going to see one of my friends or relatives, ‘Please give him or her my love’. And I expect that person to say something like ‘Malcolm sends his love’. In practice, my request simply means ‘Assure so and so of my love for them’. But God has ‘given’ us His love in a *far deeper sense* than that – because, as John knew well, *giving His love to us* involved Him in nothing less than *giving His Son for us*.<sup>15</sup> I think of the words of the Lord Jesus towards the close of John 16, ‘The Father Himself loves you!’<sup>16</sup> And the manger of Bethlehem and the Cross of Calvary tell us just how much He does!

‘That we should be called children of God!’ ‘Children’, mark you, not just His ‘offspring’ – which latter is true of the whole human race as God’s creatures. Paul announced to the men of Athens, ‘in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets (Arātus and Cleanthes)<sup>17</sup> have said, ‘For we are also His offspring’<sup>18</sup> – but, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus, we are not only God’s offspring (by creation) – we are His children (by redemption) – with all the warmth and close relationship which that word conveys.

‘That we should be called’ – that such a designation – such a title – should be ours. *Luke* tells us in chapter 11 of his Acts of the Apostles – verse 26 – that, *by the world around*, the disciples of the Lord Jesus, were first called ‘Christians’ at Antioch; but *John* tells us here that, *by God*, they are called ‘children’. The world identifies us as Christians ... God identifies us as His children.

According to the ancient oral law of the Jews, one Rabbi, whose life and teaching overlapped that of John (Rabbi Akiva), taught, ‘Beloved are Israel, for they are called children of God ... as it is said, “You are children of the Lord your God”’ – a quotation he lifted from the first verse of Deuteronomy 14.<sup>19</sup> And certainly Israel were especially loved by God and were spoken of as His children.

But John isn’t writing to Jews. He is writing to Christians, the majority of whom were gentiles ... writing to those who Paul had once described as dead, disobedient, defiled and doomed.<sup>20</sup> And yet, because of the astounding love which the Father has lavished on them, John insists that they are now, in Rabbi Akiba’s words, ‘called children of God’.

Indeed, God calls all Christians the same as John called his original readers in verse 28 of chapter 2; ‘And now, little children (the same word), abide in Him’. I don’t doubt that it meant a great deal to the earliest readers of the letter that the only surviving apostle would address them as his children, but that was nothing compared with the fact that Almighty God did the same!

But note that John doesn’t say ‘what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called *His* children’, which is how I would probably have expressed it – but ‘that we should be called children *of God*’ – that ‘we should be called children *of Him who is God*’ – stressing the honour, the dignity, the nobility of our relationship.<sup>21</sup>

I think of young David in the Old Testament, who, following his spectacular – you might say ‘stunning’ – victory over Goliath, was urged by the messengers of the then king – Saul – to marry one of Saul’s daughters. ‘Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king’s son in law’, David had responded, ‘seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed (of no great importance, of no great account)?’<sup>22</sup> But we who know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour have been brought into a *far, far more glorious family* than that of a mere earthly monarch – even if he did happen to be the king of Israel!

I recall reading of Danish missionaries who went to India many years ago and who appointed some of their Indian converts to translate a catechism. When they reached our text for this evening, one of the translators protested, ‘It is too much! Let us write that we shall be permitted to kiss his feet’ – which in India was a gesture of great respect.<sup>23</sup> The very idea that mere creatures of dust, undeserving and sinful, should be taken by God to be His children was, as the young man saw it, ‘too much’. And yet it is most wonderfully true!

But remember please that the apostle John was no recent convert. Far from it! He was now an old man. In his youth, he had been one of the favoured few to company with the Lord Jesus for over three years – and He alone had lent on the Lord’s bosom at the so-called Last Supper. His mind was stored with the 21 chapters of the fourth gospel – and what a gospel! This man had more spiritual knowledge in his little finger than I will ever have. And yet – and yet – his soul was gripped afresh and lost in wonder at the (to him) very familiar truth of the new-birth. Alas for us that we so easily lose the enjoyment and, indeed, the thrill of what it means to be born of God!

‘The world does not know us’, John adds – ‘the world does not recognise us’ – as what we are – as being God’s children. Yes, it is true of course, as John insists later,<sup>24</sup> that we should stand out as different from the unbelieving world around by the kind of life we live.

But John is saying in our verse that there is nothing *physical* or *external* to alert the world around to the fact that we are God's children. We look the same as others – we wear no halos. And it really should come as no surprise that we pass unrecognised, because,<sup>25</sup> as John says, the world was blind to the glory of the Only-begotten Son Himself. As he (John) wrote at the beginning of his gospel, 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not'.<sup>26</sup>

I remember reading of an occasion when, during the middle of the morning rush hour on 12 January 2007, a youngish man wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and a baseball cap positioned himself against a wall beside a trash can at the L'Enfant Plaza station in Washington, DC. He pulled out a violin and began to play. For 43 minutes, he performed six classical pieces. During that time, well over 1,000 people<sup>27</sup> passed by, paying little or no attention. What they didn't know was that the man playing outside the Metro that day was Joshua Bell, one of the finest classical musicians in the world. Nor did they realize that he was in fact playing on a Stradivarius worth \$3.5 million.<sup>28</sup> 'It was a strange feeling', Joshua Bell said later, 'that people were actually . . . ignoring me'.<sup>29</sup> He was unrecognised.

And so too was our Lord. The world of His day simply failed to recognise who He was. And, in the same way, John is saying, the world fails to recognise God's children for who and what they are.

Having said that 'we should be *called* children of God', John immediately assures us – twice – that the title 'children of God' isn't only a label. 'We are', he insists, God's children, not in *name only*, but in *fact* and in *reality*.<sup>30</sup> And we are God's children now!

As many of you know, there are many wonderful 'now's' of blessing in the writings of the apostle Paul.<sup>31</sup> But here John contributes one of his own – 'now we *are* children of God'. Make no mistake, if our trust lies solely in the Lord Jesus, we shall never be more the children of God than we are this evening.

And we therefore have every reason to rejoice – whatever circumstances we face. For nothing that happens to us in this life can rob us of our special relationship to God as His children. I am reminded of the question posed to Amnon, the son of King David, by Jonadab, his so-called 'friend', when Amnon carnally lusted after his sister Tamar, 'Why are you, the king's son, so lean ('so miserable') morning after morning?'<sup>32</sup> 'Why do you, the king's son, pine away morning after morning?' And the Lord may well have occasion to say to me more often that I like to admit, 'Why are you so miserable and depressed, seeing you who are the king's son'.

And, as if that is not enough, on top of it all, **having spoken of our present dignity**, John directs our attention to **our future destiny**. And, just as the reality of our **present identity is hidden from the world** around us, so the details of **our future destiny are hidden from us**.

For we can no more comprehend what we shall be than the world can comprehend what we are ... and this for the simple reason that we do not possess the faculties, the apparatus, the equipment to enable us to grasp what we are going to be. We simply cannot imagine, for example, what – should we die – it will mean to be raised (as Paul expresses it in 1 Corinthians 15) in incorruption, in glory and in power – to be raised a spiritual body.<sup>33</sup> A brilliant medical doctor of the 17th century, Sir Thomas Browne, once wrote, 'A dialogue between two infants in the womb concerning the state of *this world*, might handsomely illustrate our ignorance of *the next*'.<sup>34</sup> So too, I guess, might a discussion between two caterpillars about what it would be like when they became butterflies!

But, while frankly admitting that there is so much we **do not know**, John lets us peer through the keyhole of the other world for just a moment to assure us that we **do know** the most important thing ... we know that we shall be 'like Him' – like the Lord Jesus.<sup>35</sup>

For 'when He is revealed, we shall be like Him'. Note that word 'shall' ... 'we *shall* be like Him'. For it stands in marked contrast to what John had said at the close of chapter 2; 'when He appears (the same words as in our text<sup>36</sup>), we *may* have confidence and not shrink back from Him in shame at His coming'.<sup>37</sup> But there is no 'may' *here!* This is the happy – and the certain – prospect for every believer.

As some of us will be considering, God willing, one Monday evening next month, the apostle Paul once said, 'whom He (God) foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**'.<sup>38</sup> And surely this must rank as **the ultimate expression of God's favour** – that He has determined to make us like, **not Abraham** (of whom God spoke as His 'friend'<sup>39</sup>) ... **not Moses** (whom God knew 'face to face'<sup>40</sup>) ... **not Daniel** (of whom God spoke more than once as '**greatly beloved**'<sup>41</sup>) ... but like His own Son!

Well then did one great Bible scholar of a bygone day write ...

And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son?  
Is this the grace which He for me has won?

Father of glory! Thought beyond all thought,  
In glory to His own blest likeness brought!<sup>42</sup>

I have sometimes asked myself which of two great Bible truths is the more amazing – that one day the Saviour *came down from heaven*, to be *made like His brethren*<sup>43</sup> – or that one day His brethren will be *taken to heaven*, then made like *Him*.<sup>44</sup> I have never been able to answer that question. I only know that those of us who are Christians are an incredibly blessed and privileged people!

'We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is' – clearly the very face-to-face sight of the Lord Jesus will trigger the great change and transformation.<sup>45</sup>

I read in my New Testament of wise men who once travelled to see him, of an aged Simeon who once waited to see Him, of rich Zacchaeus who once shinned up a tree to see Him, of Herod Antipas who once desired to see Him and of certain Greeks who once requested to see Him. But the wonder of it all is that one day I shall see Him.<sup>46</sup>

And then in verse 3 John draws our attention to the practical implications of this hope.<sup>47</sup> Moving on then from ***what we are***,<sup>48</sup> and ***what we shall be***,<sup>49</sup> John now directs us to ***what we should be***. Moving on, if you like, from speaking of our ***dignity*** and our ***destiny***, he now points us to our ***duty***<sup>50</sup> - 'everyone who has this hope set on Him (the Lord Jesus) purifies himself, just as He (the Lord Jesus) is pure'.<sup>51</sup>

We know from chapter 1 that we don't 'cleanses' ourselves from our sins. Verse 7 there makes it clear that only the blood of Jesus does that; 'the blood of Jesus His (God's) Son cleanses us from all sin'. In her young days, the hymn-writer Frances Ridley Havergal was plagued by spiritual depression.<sup>52</sup> But she had a life-transforming experience one day when reading her Greek New Testament. For, when she came to that verse she discovered, from the tense of the verb John used, that the blood of Jesus 'goes on' – *keeps on* – cleansing the believer – and that from every sin. I suppose it is hardly surprising, therefore, that you will find that verse inscribed on her tombstone in the village of Astley near Kidderminster.<sup>53</sup> Make no mistake, as Miss Havergal discovered, there is both infinite and constant cleansing power in the Saviour's blood.<sup>54</sup>

But though His blood 'cleanses' me from ***the guilt*** of my every sin, He expects – indeed requires – me to 'purify' myself from the ***practice*** of sin.

And this is *not* an optional extra for the Christian – it is the bounden duty of every believer.

Indeed, I note that John switches at this point from the corporate, collective language of verses 1 and 2 – 'we are children of God'; 'we shall be like him'; 'we shall see him'; and so on – to urge every one of us, as individuals, to purify ourselves – to resist the many defiling influences around us.<sup>55</sup> And we can hardly miss that the Lord Jesus Himself – none less – is the pattern and standard of our purity!<sup>56</sup>

Because one day we shall see Him as He 'is', we should now become like Him as He 'is'.

If I am a true believer in the Lord Jesus, our Bible passage this evening assures me that one day I shall be *altogether* like the Lord Jesus. That is a staggering prospect. But it is clear from that same passage that the same Lord requires me to begin that process myself now – and not least in this, that I imitate Him in His purity and freedom from all that is unholy.<sup>57</sup>

May He so help me.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The section seems to fall most naturally into three parts:

(i) The position present and future of the children of God (3:1-3).

(ii) The essential character of the children of God (4-9).

(iii) The outward manifestation of the children of God (10-12). (Westcott)

'The three verses are perhaps the three most moving verses in the entire epistle, and they do merit our detailed consideration'. D M Lloyd-Jones, LIFE IN CHRIST: VOLUME THREE, STUDIES IN 1 JOHN.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5. 13.

<sup>3</sup> There is a sense in which all men and women are the offspring of God in that they have been created by God and derived from Him. But at the same time, Scripture is very careful to differentiate that from those who come into this special relationship of being God's as the result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 2. 29.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 4. 7.

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 5. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Taking it for granted, then, that God Himself is righteous, John tells us we must conclude that those who have this righteous God for their Father will, as a habit of life, practise righteousness – that those who are, as John says, 'born of Him', will exhibit (will show) the family traits – the spiritual family likeness. John does not say, 'Ye know that every one that is born of him doeth righteousness'; he puts it the other way round. By which he means that if you see men and women who are living a truly righteous life in the sense of the New Testament term 'righteousness,' you can be quite sure, says John, that they are born of God.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 1. 3, 7; 2. 3, 5, 24. In effect, John says, 'I want you to realise that as the result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ you are not only in fellowship with God, you have become children of God; you are born of Him'.

<sup>9</sup> It will be mentioned more than once from this point onwards (see 3. 9; 4. 7; 5. 1, 4, 18). Here the point is that 'membership in the family of God is to be recognised by the family likeness', F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John*, page 78.

<sup>10</sup> Matt. 8. 27.

<sup>11</sup> It came from the Father and was, as John says later, displayed fully in the death of the Lord Jesus ... 'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins', 1 John 4. 9-10.

Peter attributes new-birth to God's great mercy (the response of pity to misery); 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant ('much', great) mercy has begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead', 1 Pet 1. 3. James attributes new-birth to His sovereign will, 'Of his own will he begat us (brought us forth) by the word of truth', James 1.18. But John attributes new-birth to His extraordinary 'love'. Not that this is in any way surprising; love is very much John's key word; occurring 46 times in this letter alone, plus 'beloved' five times (as 1 John 3. 2).

<sup>12</sup> John 3. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Peter attributes new-birth to God's great mercy (the response of pity to misery); 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant ('much', great) mercy has begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead', 1 Pet 1. 3. James attributes new-birth to His sovereign will, 'Of His own will he begat us (brought us forth) by the word of truth', James 1.18. But John attributes new-birth to His extraordinary 'love'. Not that this is in any way surprising; love is very much John's key word

<sup>14</sup> 1 John 3. 1 literally.

<sup>15</sup> John 3. 16.

<sup>16</sup> John 16. 27. And these words came from the One who appreciated the Father's love for Himself; John 17. 24; Mark 1. 11; John 3. 35; 5. 20; 10. 17 ... Col. 1. 13; Eph. 1. 6.

<sup>17</sup> The Cretan poet Epimenides (ca. 600 B.C.; cf. Tit\_1:12) had written, "For in thee we live and move and have our being." [From his poem Cretica] The Cilician poet Aratus (c. 315-240 B.C.), and Cleanthes (331-233 B.C.) before him, had written, "We are also his offspring." [From Aratus' Phaenomena 5, and Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus.]

<sup>18</sup> Acts 17. 28; following on from 'He made from one man every nation of mankind', v. 26.

<sup>19</sup> The full quotation is, 'Rabbi Akiva would say ... Beloved are Israel, for they are called children of God; it is a sign of even greater love that it has been made known to them that it was made known to them that they are called children of God, as it is said, "You are children of the Lord your God"', Ethics of the Fathers (Pirke Abot), 3. 14. Available at ... [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2019/jewish/Chapter-Three.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2019/jewish/Chapter-Three.htm) (The biblical reference is Deut. 14. 1.)

See also <http://www.torah.org/learning/pirkei-avos/chapter3-18a.html>. Judaism's oral law is recorded in writing in sixty-three tractates and is called the Mishnah. One of the Mishnah's tractates contains no laws at all. It is called *Pirke Abot* (usually translated as Ethics of the Fathers), in which their most famous sayings and proverbs are recorded. Rabbi Akiva lived from AD 50 to AD 135. See F F Bruce on 1 John 3. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Eph. 2. 1-3.

<sup>21</sup> Literally, 'behold what love has given us the Father'. As if drawing together the great contrast.

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Sam. 18. 23.

<sup>23</sup> 'The 'Speaker's Commentary' quotes the following anecdote: 'When some heathen converts to Christianity were translating a Catechism into their own language, they came upon 1 John 3:2. They stopped. 'No; it is too much,' they said; 'let us write that we shall be permitted to kiss his feet.'" (Pulpit Commentary)

'When the Danish missionaries in India appointed some of their Indian converts to translate a catechism, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become the sons of God, one of the translators, startled at so bold a saying as he thought it, said, "It is too much; let me rather render it, They shall be permitted to kiss his feet"'.  
<http://ilyston.wordpress.com/2014/02/04/>

<sup>24</sup> 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother', 1 John 3. 10.

<sup>25</sup> 'For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him'.

<sup>26</sup> John 1. 10. Compare 'those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him', Acts 13. 27.

<sup>27</sup> 1,097 to be precise.

<sup>28</sup> In total he collected \$32.17 cents.

<sup>29</sup> See <http://www.rbc.org/devotionals/our-daily-bread/2008/03/22/devotion.aspx>. March 22, 2008, and, especially, <http://www.snopes.com/music/artists/bell.asp>. Joshua Bell was born on 9 December 1967

<sup>30</sup> We are not like street kids staring in goggle-eyed through window of some high-class restaurant window; we are on the inside, feasting.

<sup>31</sup> For example, 'being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him', Rom. 5. 9; 'there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus', Rom. 8. 1; 'now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ', Eph. 2. 13.

<sup>32</sup> 2 Sam. 13. 4.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 42-44.

<sup>34</sup> *Hydriotaphia*, chapter IIII. <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/hydrioframes/hydrio4.html> (Paragraph above note 16.) Contrast the version in <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/Our.Daily.Bread/94-2qtr/db940617.txt>

<sup>35</sup> Cf. 'with Him', 'see Him' and 'like Him'.

<sup>36</sup> 1 John 3. 2.

<sup>37</sup> 1 John 2. 28.

<sup>38</sup> Rom. 8. 29.

<sup>39</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 7; Isa. 41. 8; James 2. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Deuteronomy 34. 10.

<sup>41</sup> Dan. 10. 11, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Destined for that vision glorious.

<sup>43</sup> John 6. 33, 38, 50; Heb. 2. 17.

<sup>44</sup> 1 John 3. 2; Phil. 3. 20-21.

<sup>45</sup> In the breaking of bread we remember Him principally as He *was*; but we will see Him as He *is*. One day, John tells us in the opening of Revelation 22, 'His servants shall serve Him (literally, 'His bond-servants shall worshipfully serve Him'): and they shall see His face', Rev. 22. 3-4. Remember Absalom, 'And David said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face ... So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face ... And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent to you, saying, Come here, that I may send you to the king, to say, Why am I come from Geshur? I may as well have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face', 2 Sam.14. 24, 28, 32. The city and the royal house were not enough; only the king's face would suffice.

Both inwardly (for that sight will accomplish in an instant what long years of sanctification here have failed to do) and outwardly (for now we have a body perfectly suited to the earth; but then we shall have a 'spiritual' body, perfectly suited to heaven). Paul tells me in 1 Cor. 15 that, because of my links with the first man Adam – because of my natural descent from him – in the present I have a body which is like his was – 'soulish', vv. 44-45. The first man was 'out of the earth' – 'made of dust' – 'Dusty Adam' if you like – and, because of my links with him, I too now have a body made of dust, v. 48. But, as a Christian, I also have links with another Man – with 'the Man of heaven', v. 48 (lit.) – with the Risen Lord. And I can be fully confident that – because of my links with Him – I shall one day have a body just like His. Just as I now bear the image of 'the man of dust', I shall one day bear the image of 'the man of heaven', v. 49.

Paul has in his mind the fact that Adam had his own proper realm and that Christ has His. Adam belonged to earth – the Lord Jesus belongs to heaven. Adam had a body suited to the earthly realm – the Risen Lord has a body suited to the heavenly realm. In terms of chronology and their appearance in the world, the 'soulish' man (Adam, the man of dust) came first – and the 'spiritual' (Christ, – the man of heaven) came later, v. 46. And that sequence is exactly the same for us. First, now, we have a 'soulish' body – perfectly suited to the earth. But then, one day, we shall have a 'spiritual' body – perfectly suited to heaven. Wow – what a mind-blowing prospect.

Paul told the Philippians, 'our citizenship is in heaven, from where we await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body', Phil. 3. 20-21. Do you see the connection? In effect, Paul is saying that a heavenly people must have bodies suited to the heavenly realm – just as the Saviour's own glorious body is.

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<sup>46</sup> All from John's pen: 'With Him' (John 14), 'like Him' and 'see Him' – what more could anyone ask.

<sup>47</sup> The very first word, 'and', tells us that this verse is intimately and logically connected with what has gone before.

<sup>48</sup> 1 John 3. 1-2a.

<sup>49</sup> 1 John 3. 2b.

<sup>50</sup> 'The hortatory overtones of this verse are obvious, even though it is couched in 'indicative' language'.

<sup>51</sup> This is the only place in which John uses the word 'hope'; which is a characteristic thought of both Paul and Peter. John doesn't argue the point – he doesn't discuss it. He simply states it ... 'everyone who has this hope in Him (better, on Him – that is, set on Him, the Lord Jesus, as its ground and basis) purifies himself, just as He (the Lord Jesus) is pure'. As far as the apostle is concerned, the one thing follows the other as surely as night follows day. That is, hope centres in the person: 'Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the command of God our Saviour, and of Christ Jesus our hope', 1 Tim. 1. 1; cf. our peace, Eph. 2. 14; our life, Col. 3. 4.

<sup>52</sup> She wrote, for example, 'I am trusting Thee; Lord, speak to me; Master, speak, thy servant heareth; O Saviour, precious Saviour; Take my life and let it be; True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal; Who is on the Lord's side'.

<sup>53</sup> In Worcestershire.

<sup>54</sup> 'One of the intensest moments of my life was when I saw the force of that word "cleanseth." The utterly unexpected and altogether unimagined sense of its fulfilment to me, on simply believing it in its fullness, was just indescribable. I expected nothing like it short of Heaven ... If "all" in 1 John 1. 7 does not mean "all," how much does it mean? And if "cleanseth" only means "cleansed me when I said my prayers last night" what force is there in tenses? And I know that such a blessing is to be had, and that life is a different thing then. And I know that it is not perfection, nor perfectionism, because if it were, I should not need and desire and claim that wonderful perpetual present tense—"goes on cleansing"; I cannot do without the precious blood of Jesus one hour or one moment', F. R. Havergal. [http://www.kingsleypress.com/previews/frances\\_havergal.php](http://www.kingsleypress.com/previews/frances_havergal.php).

<sup>55</sup> And I note that John uses the same tense here that he had in chapter 1 verse 7 – there telling me that the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing me; here telling me that I am to keep on purifying myself – to keep on resisting the many defiling influences around me ... to be constantly on my guard against anything impure. See 1 Cor. 6. 18 and compare the example of Joseph, Gen. 39. 12.

<sup>56</sup> In this life men become like the objects of their worship. As to idols, they that make them shall be like unto them (Psa. 115. 8). As to believers, even now, 'reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord' they are 'transfigured unto the same image from glory to glory' ( 2 Cor. 3. 18 ).

<sup>57</sup> 1 John 3. 5. The pattern of the Lord Jesus is frequently held up as an example to believers; 1 John 2. 6; 3. 7, 16; 4. 17.