

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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WHAT GOD HAS PREPARED

David Spinks

Hebrews 10: 5-14

1 Corinthians 2: 6-16

John 14: 1-3

These scriptures we have read speak of what God has prepared. God has prepared so much. He prepared it in a past eternity. The scripture we read of in Hebrews speaks of that and it should affect every believer. He says here, "Sacrifice and offering thou willedst not; but thou hast prepared me a body". We are on holy ground, and I feel unable to speak of such great and glorious things, but it is wonderful to think that in a past eternity the conversation in the Godhead was that there was One who would take a 'body prepared'. There was One who was willing to empty Himself, as it says in Philippians 2 and take a bondman's form. A body prepared: a body prepared by God.

In this body that was prepared He was going to recover and give glory to God now and eternally, and deal with everything that stood in the way to remove it for God's glory eternally. He was going to bring a people through as I read in John's gospel, "I go to prepare you a place".

Christianity grows in your heart. As you come in to see Christ, you come in through an opened door. You maybe come in initially as a sinner saved by grace; you come in through the narrow door. But as you go in through the narrow door you see a glorious Man and He is the Son and the centre and the subject and the power and the life that is everything that is in Christianity. So I say to the youngest believer here that if you know Christ you have got everything you need.

It is a hard thing when you are younger because there are so many things to influence us and so many things to attract us in the world. And even when we get older there are still things that attract us. It is wonderful when you see something that is more attractive, that is permanent, something that is stable and can never be shaken. It speaks in 1 Corinthians 3 of Christ as a foundation.

May it touch our hearts tonight to see the glory of all that God has prepared in a Man called Jesus. If these things are prepared by God you can be assured they will come through to fulfilment and never fail or break down. We live in a day when we are used to breakdown and we are used to failure. We are used to things beginning again because

something has been corrupted and failed. There is no failure in Christ. There is no failure in this sure foundation. There is no failure in the One who came in to take a body prepared, prepared to fill out the will of God: 'perfection in a Man'; we sometimes sing that:

Divine perfection in a Man. (Hymn 20)

How wonderful it is to see it.

Every heart and every soul that is saved for eternity will be gazing and having their affections fixed on this blessed Man. There will be nothing to distract us. There will be no other object there. It affects me that there was One of the Godhead who was prepared to come into manhood, to meet the sin question, to recover man for God and bring about everything for the pleasure of God eternally.

What does He say here? "Sacrifice and offering thou wilt not". Think of what was brought out in the Old Testament about the thousands of sacrifices that were brought yearly. Here is one precious, holy Sacrifice that was acceptable to God. He accepted that sacrifice, and as a believer you have been affected by it, and have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus because you have put your faith in Him. You have trusted in His finished work; and it is also wonderful to seek the Spirit's help, to dig deep, in page upon page of what is found in Scripture about that blessed Man, and you will never find disappointment.

There are so many pages in the Bible; it says in John's gospel that if the books were written the world would never contain them, chap 21: 25. "Thou tookest no pleasure in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin. Then I said, Lo, I come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will". "In the roll of the book": think of when that book was opened. Think of how in the roll of the book a day came when this Babe was born into Bethlehem's manger and there was One who was coming in and taking up a body to do the will of Another. How glorious!

Somebody said to me, 'Christianity is very tangible because it is found in a Man who lives in heaven'. That is glorious. We are not speaking here of some mystical thing. I am speaking of a glorious Man and the object is that He should become greater in our affections. "Lo, I come (in the roll of the book ...) to do, O God, thy will". There was no other who could do that will; there is no other who could fulfil it to the glory of God. No other man that God took up, many in the Old Testament, many good men, could ever fulfil the will of God, and neither could you and neither could I. There is only one Man who came in

prepared in obedience to fulfil it to the glory of God. And He has done it; He has taken it up. Coming into the world, seeing what sin has done: think of the ravages of sin and the bitterness that has come into the heart and mind of man due to the fall of man, and here was one Man who was coming in to take up the sin question.

“Above, saying Sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou willedst not, neither tookest pleasure in (which are offered according to the law); then he said, Lo, I come to do thy will. He takes away the first that he may establish the second”. This is glorious because this brings you and me in. Christ takes away the first order of man, and He brings in another order which is out of heaven; the second Man as out of heaven, 1 Cor 15: 47. God in His grace does not just leave man in a vacuum but He took the first away in a Man who bore the iniquity and met the sin question and He settled it righteously to God's glory eternally. This Man took it away that He may establish the second.

The second Man is out of heaven. “He takes away the first that he may establish the second”. The establishing of the second is continuing right through this dispensation. I wonder if I am established in the character of a Man who is out of heaven. Christ, my Saviour, has removed sin in its totality, and He is now living in heaven and He is establishing men according to the Man who fills heaven. Am I being established according to that Man and am I being influenced by the grace of the Saviour? That is the character of the second Man. That is the character of the Man who does not come in by force. Men in this world put man under authority by force. You come under authority of the Saviour by grace. You come under His authority through the establishing of the second. He established it as coming out of death. He has established it by going into glory, and the Spirit having come, and He lives there. And not only that: “By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”.

Sanctification has been accomplished. The saint who has trusted in Jesus is set apart for holy purposes. I am not set apart now, as saved by God in His grace through the Lord Jesus, to do my own will. It says here, “sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”. I wonder if I understand that. Am I set apart, and do I believe that God has set me apart for Himself? Or do I believe that God saves me to leave me to do my own will? Never! That could never be the case because God wants every believer whom He has purchased,

in whom He has wrought, and whom He has redeemed through the precious blood of Jesus, for Himself and for Himself alone. That is the grace of God that brings man back for Himself and gives blessing to the creature in whom He does it. How wonderful.

“And every priest stands daily ministering, and offering often the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But *he*, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down in perpetuity”. What does that mean? He has sat down forever “at the right hand of God, waiting from henceforth until his enemies be set for the footstool of His feet”. I am sure there is no soul in this room that is an enemy of God. But every soul will have to bow to Jesus, bow to this Man, and I am sure every believer here has done. That is a wonderful thing to do. But put yourself in the way of what He has effectuated in His love, that He has taken away the first and established the second, and you are sanctified in that blessed Man. You are set apart for the holy purpose of God, waiting for henceforth.

“For by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified”: perfected forever, perfect in the sight of God. Once you are saved and have faith in the blood of Jesus and you have the gift of God's Spirit within you, you are perfect for God's presence. That is wonderful. You are a soul who has been recovered by the grace of God and you are ready because of the operations of divine love, perfected in the presence of a holy, righteous, loving God.

And that is why I read in Corinthians where it speaks of, “Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man's heart, which God has prepared for them that love him”. That is the question that I ask myself more than anything. God loves me; do I love God? That is the question for every heart here. God desires to have every soul in His own presence in suitability. But do I want these great things which eye has not seen and ear not heard; the things that God has prepared for those that love Him? God loves me, but do I love God? Do I love the things which He shows me, the secrets which He opens up to me, the great things that He shows me as in Christ Jesus, the things that are opened with the power and grace of the Holy Spirit that this chapter goes on to reveal.

Again I ask the younger brethren here and all of us, 'Do you have the gift and the power of the grace of the Spirit functioning in your life?'. It is a gift of God, a free gift that He would desire to give to you. It is part of what God has prepared. Think of divine Persons there in a past

eternity, each one of Them preparing to come in to take up an action in this world which would be for the blessing of man and the glory of God eternally. How wonderful that is.

Think of the Lord and what He has taken up. Think of the lowly place the Spirit has taken up, a divine Person coming to dwell within the heart of the believer, young and old alike. God dwelling in your heart through faith. How wonderful. What does it say of the Spirit? "But God has revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God". No one knows the depths of God apart from the Spirit of God. I do not know if there is anyone who could say they have touched the depths of God. So it shows that we will never fathom this great area which God has prepared for us. We will never reach the end of it. There is something that can be taken in and can be opened up to your mind and to your heart and your affections every day of your life and God has prepared it for you. He prepared it for you to receive it and for you to be encouraged and built up in it. How wonderful a thing it is.

"But we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been freely given to us of God: which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means". We are in an atmosphere today where things are communicated by spiritual means. We can take in spiritual things by spiritual means. In the reading we conversed over the truth together, and I believe we are in an atmosphere where love had liberty to speak spiritual things by spiritual means. How wonderful that is. There is the liberty of the Spirit of God opening up something of the things that are prepared by God for the saints who love God.

I think as you get older you begin to see how fragile the things of the world are. How great and glorious the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. I wish I knew them more. But God gives a desired heart and He can fill the youngest soul and He will give you more. You will never exhaust what God has prepared for you. It is limitless in that sense.

"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him; and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned; but the spiritual discerns all things, and *he* is discerned of no one". At the end of that passage where we read it says, "we have the mind of Christ". Paul was speaking to the Corinthian saints who are going back and he was trying to encourage them to

show what they had, the resource they had, not in themselves, not in anything that was of man, but the things which God had prepared, things which are of God. He had to go on to the next chapter to speak to them as to babes, “babes in Christ”, v 2. That is the scripture which speaks of the foundation which has been laid. How wonderful it is.

“But we have the mind of Christ”. I would encourage all of us, but our young ones especially, to find yourself in the body of the assembly, to find your life in the environment where the Spirit speaks, where Christ's headship is known and where God's wisdom is known, where the things which God has prepared for those who love Him are known. They are not known in the world. They are not known by the intelligence of man, but they are known by the simple believer who desires to understand them and makes way for the great resources that God gives them. Do I make way for the Spirit? There is something far greater for man than man could ever get for himself, things “which God has prepared for them that love him”, the glory of them all, as I believe they are found in the assembly at the present moment. “We have the mind of Christ”.

We are in a broken day. We live in a day of small localities and where ones and twos gather. “But we have the mind of Christ”: how glorious that is! We have the power of the Spirit. We have a resource outside of the world that gives us the avenue to see the things that God has prepared. Eye has not seen nor ear heard the things that God has prepared for those that love Him. Again, I bring that question back to my own heart. Do I love God enough, do I love the things of God enough, do I love the people of God enough to come out during the week and to find out more of the great things which are in the Scripture, are in the heart of the Lord Jesus, and are in the hand of the assembly, to make known the great things of God? They are prepared for us. That means that they were there in the thoughts of God before time began. God does not have afterthoughts. I speak reverently and carefully: God has prepared these things. And He has prepared them and put them in the assembly for the blessing of the personnel and for the glory of God. How wonderful.

Every one of us in this room here belong to a locality, and you should feel blessed and thankful for that. You are brought into a company where the saints love you and they cherish you. And I say again, to you, younger brethren, find yourself in the local assembly. Find yourself in the body of the saints because there is life there; there

is preservation there and there is the operation of the Spirit there. There are things which God has prepared for those that love Him. God is not loved in the world. Even in the sphere of Christendom, there are areas where it is man that is loved. They put the name of Christ on it sadly, but man is loved there. Let us be in the area where God is loved and where the Spirit has access to open up the truth to us, the great things of God. They will be the occupation of the saints eternally.

I read in John 14 because there is a Man who has now gone to prepare us a place. The blessed Man who came here and took up a body prepared has gone in to prepare a place for the saints in glory. How wonderful. I think that is grace that the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who loves you, desires to take you to be where He is and to enjoy the love that He enjoys in the presence of the Father Himself. This is what the Son does. This is the operation of the Son Himself: "I go to prepare you a place". Why? "That where I am ye also may be". Do not stop, or fall short, in enjoying the great things that God has prepared for those that love Him. Do not stop short in the great things of God because we will be those who miss out. The great terminus for the believer is over the Jordan, enjoying the things where Christ is in liberty in the Father's house.

These are things that God has prepared for those who love Him. "I go to prepare you a place". That preparation involved the suffering of the Saviour. That blessed Man, my friend, went into death in order to secure a vessel for His own pleasure eternally. He has done it for all men, but as it says in Scripture, He has done it in relation to the assembly and He carries this company back into the love of the Father Himself. The great terminus in Christianity is the love of the Father. How wonderful and gracious it is of divine Persons that they take up everything that they enjoy to bring us into the same relationship. The Lord Jesus was worthy to go back into glory at any time as fulfilling the will of God, but He died upon the cross, He suffered the shame and agony of it. He bore the matter of sin upon the cross. He has gone up into glory and the Spirit has come in order that we may enjoy the things that God has prepared.

And He has gone in. He has gone right in to the presence of the Father. "I go to prepare you a place; and if I go and shall prepare you a place, I am coming again and shall receive you to myself": "receive you to myself". We will be like that blessed Man in sonship's glory eternally. The great terminus of everything that is in Christianity is found in Christ.

He is the Man who has prepared it. He has prepared it; the body was prepared for Him. He has come in in grace to resolve every issue outstanding between God and man and now the grace of the Spirit comes and He dwells in the assembly. And there you see everything prepared.

This is my simple impression. Do not move outside of the bounds of the love of God. Do not move outside of the bounds of what God has prepared. He is not just prepared to save you: how great that is! He is prepared to bring you in and to love you, - to put the ring upon your hand and the sandals upon your feet, and to give you the dignity of one of the sons of God in the presence of the Father. How great is divine love. How great is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. May we be uplifted and may we be encouraged by the things that God has prepared.

May the Lord bless the word for His Name's sake.

Edinburgh

25th January 2025

THE LIVING ONE

David A Brown

Luke 24:1-9

Revelation 1:17, 18

I had an impression as to Christ being the Living One. We sang hymn 151 at the beginning of our occasion together and verse 4 begins with:

Our Lord, our Life.

As I sang that hymn and these words, the challenge arose in my affections, 'Is Christ really my life'? Is this glorious Man that we have read of in Luke and Revelation merely a historical Person, or has He a living influence and a living impact in and on my life?

You think of how the Lord Jesus came in as a blessed Man. It says at the beginning of John's gospel, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men", chap 1: 4. He was the true Light and He came in amidst the darkness and it says, "and the darkness apprehended it not", v 5. The Light of God was shining in a blessed Man and that light became life to those who received it. I have been thinking recently as to this matter of what and who we receive. Have we really received the Lord Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit into our lives to make the things that we believe in real? Or are divine things merely held as head knowledge with us? Is Christ a living Man to us and is He the One who fills our gaze?

These women whom I have read of in Luke 24 were real believers but they had forgotten what had been said to them by the Lord Jesus.. They came bearing aromatic spices to embalm the Lord Jesus. They expected to see a dead Man in the tomb. But the Lord Jesus is a glorious living Person and it is my desire that He might fill our souls with His life. It speaks in scripture (Eph 4: 18) of those who are "estranged from the life of God". Christ brings the life of God into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. May we all breathe in the atmosphere of heaven and be living witnesses to the blessed truth of what we believe.

We have already heard tonight about the reality of Christianity being expressed so that we might be a witness by the Spirit to the living character of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read on Lord's day in John 15 where the Lord Jesus is speaking as to the Comforter coming "whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes forth from

with the Father, *he* shall bear witness concerning me”, v 26. How was that going to be achieved? That was not just for the disciples but would also go forward into our day. We are to witness to a glorified, risen and living One through the power of the Holy Spirit. Are we indeed witnesses? Are we able to express our living appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives?

These women came with aromatic spices which they had prepared beforehand and found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb. When they entered the tomb “they found not the body of the Lord Jesus” but “two men suddenly stood by them in shining raiment”. What a witness they rendered to the fact that Christ was no longer there. He had broken the power of death and had risen as a glorified and blessed Man. He had risen up from that grave! Believe in a glorious Man who is greater than the power of death! It says that He “has annulled death, and brought to light life and incorruptibility”, 2 Tim 1: 10. . That is the blessed Man I believe in!

Do you believe in the truth of a living Man, a Man who is here for us? How true are the words which we sung?

Our Lord, our Life, our Rest, our Shield,
Our Rock, Our Food, our Light.

Think of all these wonderful descriptions of the blessed Lord Jesus. What does He mean to you? The scripture says, “And as they were filled with fear ... they said to them, Why seek ye the living one among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spoke to you, being yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and rise the third day”. That is quite a test to me. The women forgot this important message that He must rise the third day. So the Spirit brings the *currency* of the speaking of heaven into our souls as we are together at a time like this. He would bring impressions into our minds and into our affections. When the Lord Jesus was glorified, the Holy Spirit came here and indwelt human vessels. That is a wonderful matter to consider. He indwells the assembly and He communicates what is transpiring in heaven into human hearts such as we are here in this room tonight. May we live in the vitality and the living character of what is proceeding in heaven, through the power of the blessed Holy Spirit.

In Revelation, John is on the isle of Patmos and he is all alone there. Some might think it a time for despondency or for depression or

for becoming overcome with circumstances. What does the scripture say? "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's day", Rev. 1:10. What an overcomer John was. I believe he was an overcomer because he was one who knew the preciousness of the love of the Lord Jesus personally. John knew what it was to lean on His bosom and here he is in one sense in these circumstances. I am aware it is in a judicial setting because of the way it speaks of the Lord in "a garment reaching to the feet", and so on, v 13. But I think there is something special about verses 17 and 18 in this chapter. "And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead". No wonder he fell at his feet as dead because he was not used to seeing the Lord in this way. "And he laid his right hand upon me": that is the right hand of power. We have already spoken about the touch of the Lord Jesus and it is a wonderful thing to experience the personal touch of Christ in your life. John would never forget this experience with the Lord and it would colour his ministry; it would colour his writing. And it also gives a vitality and a spiritual energy and vigour to this Revelation which he wrote, the Revelation of John. How wonderful it is. It says, "Fear not; I am the first and the last". So the Lord would say, "Fear not".

Circumstances might be against us. The Lord would come in and put His hand upon us and say, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one". Is that not a wonderful comfort to the soul? He knows the end from the beginning. He knows what is going to happen. He knows exactly what our course is going to be. How wonderful it is, therefore, just to commit ourselves into the hand of the Lord Jesus. Commit ourselves to that One who is "the first and the last, and the living one".

John fell at his feet as dead. How he must have been totally overwhelmed by the situation that he was in and yet the Lord puts His hand on him and says, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one". What a transition, the transfer of living power from that blessed One into John. The Lord Jesus says, "I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages". He does not say, 'I died', or 'Behold, I die', but "I became dead". That shows the power of the Lord Jesus, my Saviour and your Saviour, over the power of Satan and over the power of death.

There are many persons who are going through difficult circumstances, difficulties in health and so on. We hear of them and pray for them regularly and I would say as a comfort for them: "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and

behold, I am living to the ages of ages". I was thinking of Joseph and how he worked in order that he might come near his brethren and impart to them something of the life that was in him as speaking characteristically of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord would come near to us and impart His own personal touch in life. John would be a witness to this experience that he had. The Spirit would enable us to witness for Him as we are not to be persons who keep things to ourselves. I think it is good when we can express the characteristics of the One in whom we believe, a witness here in this dark world to what Christ has done for us. And then He says, "and have the keys of death and of hades". He has the power over everything that Satan can contrive.

In our quieter moments, how wonderful it is just to go in and sit in the presence of Jesus. To sit in His presence and to learn from Him. Ask Him to impart to your soul something of His glory and love and of His knowledge of the Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a greater impression of that One who fills and adorns heaven. These things are very real and important in our lives so that we are maintained as witnessing for Christ. The need is for faithfulness. I think John was one who was faithful; faithful to the end. He was a reserve man. Mr J N Darby said we must cleave to Paul but not forget John, see eg JT vol 78 p389. John was a family man and expressed life; therefore you could write across John's gospel 'The Living One'.

What does scripture say at the end of John's gospel: "but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing ye might have life in his name", chap 20: 31. How true that is: we might have life in the name of the Lord Jesus. I think John writes with life in mind, that we might be imbued with the heavenly life that our brothers have been speaking about.

May these things be for the encouragement of every soul in this room for His Name's sake.

Word in ministry meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland

11th February 2025

THE LOVE OF THE CHRIST

Alastair S Pittman

Ephesians 3: 19 (to “knowledge”)

Romans 5: 6-8

Psalms 109: 5

Matthew 27: 27-31, 33-54

2 Corinthians 5: 14, 15

We read this scripture in the house this morning about “the love of the Christ”, “and to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge”. Do you know something of “the love of the Christ”? It is more wonderful than I can speak adequately about. The scripture says that it “surpasses knowledge”, so it would be impossible to compass it or to cover the fulness of it, but I am sure, as the scripture says, it is there to be known, although it is beyond knowledge. It cannot be exhausted and it is beyond what is even comparable with natural love, “the love of the Christ”. We often think of this scripture and think of it as love towards me, love towards saints, but it goes further than that, no doubt, love towards His God and Father, the love of the will of His God and Father, love that meant He went that way, “the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge”.

But I wish just to speak about it in the gospel preaching as to how that love is towards us, towards each one. It is available to you. I wonder, beloved, if you have experienced the love of the Christ. Is it something which has affected your soul? At the end of the reading, a brother remarked how we speak not according to intelligence, but what impulse is given is given according to affection, and I wondered, beloved, what place Christ has in your heart. Very simply, what place does Christ have in your heart? Do you love Jesus? How simple a question it is! Is He someone that you give room to, who has a place in your heart? The youngest one knows the simplicity of the question. Does Jesus have His place in your heart? Is He someone that you speak to? Do you love Him? Do you have that relationship with Him because you know that He went to the cross for you? If you know that, then you know something of “the love of the Christ”. How precious it is! You may say this is such an elevated scripture, “to know the love of the Christ which surpasses knowledge; that ye may be filled even to all the fulness of God”. Have you experienced something of that, even if you know it in measure as a simple believer? How precious it is; how

available are God's wondrous thoughts to us. The simplest brother or sister can know them, know them for ourselves in reality in our heart. How precious it is!

Jesus is, as we know, in His own Person, the One “who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom 9: 5), but not only that, He expresses God, as Man, in the fullest and most complete way. The scripture I have in mind as to that is that He is “the effulgence of” God’s “glory and the expression of his substance”, Heb 1: 3. What does that mean and how does that relate to this scripture, “the love of the Christ”? Well, God’s nature is love; that is what it is. It is not just an attribute or a characteristic - no doubt it is seen in all that He does - but His very nature is love, and it is expressed in a substantial way in Jesus Himself. Think of that, because He is God! How perfect it is that God’s love, His very nature, is seen in Jesus! Think of Jesus in His perfection! We sometimes sing that hymn, how precious it is:

O God of all Thy wondrous plan,
Divine perfection in a Man! (Hymn 20)

Look at that hymn and think about 'Divine perfection in a Man' and contrast that with yourself as well - very far from perfect, but it is far more than that. *Even* the expression of divine love was there in perfection, the absolute perfection of everything which was seen in Jesus. There was much more than just the difference between what is right and wrong; everything that was displayed in Jesus was in perfection. Think of what a Man He is, how He was able to express God’s very nature in a world which was entirely against Him. What did the world’s rejection do? Did that turn Him aside? No, it brought out the depths of that devotion and perfection of that love in a fuller and deeper way, that we might appreciate it more.

“The love of the Christ” is supposed to affect you; it is supposed to be appealing. It shows God’s love in its fulness, which is why I read in Romans 5, wonderful scripture, very well known, that “God commends *his* love to us”. Think of how wonderful that is that God does not demand, or command us to respond to His love, or any such thing, but He is *commending* it. He is showing it in its display and He is saying, 'This is my love; it is seen in Jesus; I commend it to you, not because you are a good man, far be the thought'. It says, “in the due time Christ has died for the ungodly. For scarcely for the just man will one die, for perhaps for the good man some one might also dare to die; but God

commends *his* love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us". It was not when we were believers, or when we were going to the meeting, or breaking bread or any of these things. It was not when we turned over a new leaf and might somehow thought we were better. It was when we were "still sinners" that Christ died for us. We were far from God, as far away as we could be; you might say, a chasm between us. That is when Christ died for us. Does that commend itself to you? It was not when we were thinking about Christ or anything like that. No! It was when we were afar off. That is when Christ died for us, and it is commended. God in His grace shows it. He says, 'Take account! Look what has been done! What do you think?'. He shows it to you in the most gracious and blessed and attractive way and says, 'What do you think? I am commending it to you'.

Well, beloved, what do you think? Think of that question Pilate asked, "What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?", Matt 27: 22. Well, God is commending His love to you. The question is still there. What have you done with Jesus? What have you done? Where is He in your heart? He is commended. It is not for a good man; it is not for a just man, so that we might think, 'Well, it was because we were good that Christ did that'. No! It is, "we being still sinners, Christ has died for us". Beloved, I wonder if that commends itself to you. Think about divine love! It is so different from natural love. Natural love may be dreadfully transactional. If someone does something good to you, you do something good back and if somebody is not very nice, you may perhaps sadly not be very nice in return. God's love is not like that; it is *commended* to us. Whilst we were far from God, "still sinners". The note in Ephesians 2 is very affecting. The verse is about us: "Wherefore remember that ye, once nations in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that called circumcision in the flesh done with the hand; that ye were at that time without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world", v 11, 12. What a position! Note 'h' to verse 12 says, 'atheists'. That is what we were, "without God in the world". Do not think you are any better than that! That is where we were, "we being still sinners Christ has died for us". What a Man He is!

The Lord Jesus came into this scene, and I wanted to just touch on the enduring character of His love. The aspect I wish to touch on is that, no matter what happened, and man's contrary nature towards

Christ, He still went on in love for men, in love for me. It says in Psalm 109, "And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love". Think of the Lord Jesus coming into this scene of His own accord. He came of His own will:

Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me -
To do thy good pleasure, my God, Ps 40: 7, 8.

He came into this scene, His own action, as a Babe. Think of the greatness of who He was, yet He came into the scene at its weakest point, as a Babe, but what He became never took away from who He is, the greatness of who He is. But whilst He was here, was there any reason at all why men would have rejected Him except that their works were dark and they hated them being brought to the light? What a thing it is that the nature of man is so against Christ that "they have rewarded me evil for good". It says in Acts He "went through all quarters doing good", chap 10: 38. He is harmless, a harmless Man, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb 7: 26), completely harmless. He would never have done anyone any harm.

There was an affecting touch in the preaching a few weeks ago about Jairus's daughter. They say, "Thy daughter has died, why troublest thou the teacher any further?" Mark 5: 35. The brother said it was no trouble, no trouble for the Teacher. Nothing was too much trouble for Jesus; He would have gone farther. He went to see Jairus's daughter and He raised her. It was no trouble to Jesus!

He "endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself", Heb 12: 3. What He endured! Think of the enduring character of what Jesus went through, how He must have felt the rejection of His own people: "He came to his own, and his own received him not", John 1: 11. They were looking for some wonderful display of majesty, *which was there*, but they wanted it on their terms, some great pomp and ceremony, but this was the son of the carpenter, a carpenter in a lowly dwelling in Nazareth, growing up a Man amongst men, a Man who would have had a neighbour, a Man that desired no reputation and no place. That was who Jesus was. He "did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself", Phil 2: 6, 7. Think of the condition into which Jesus came, a Man in flesh and blood conditions that we might have claim upon Him. That is why He came as a Man that you might have claim upon Him, that you might be saved. What a position He took, how available. The beggar on the street

would call out and He would stop and stand still and that beggar got up. He would do no one any harm. He was treading out the full will of God in perfection, and He stood still. Think of Him standing still for Bartimaeus, Mark 10: 49. He touched the leper, handled him freely, Mark 1: 41. Well, He is available to all; He is available to you. What the love of the Christ had to endure from men! What a love it is! How can we speak of it? It is too great to speak of it, but it should commend itself and it should soften our hearts that "hatred" was rewarded for His love. Hatred! Think of that! It was not just a disregard for it; it was a bitter hatred.

We come to Matthew 27 and we see the end of the Lord Jesus's public service in His life here. What a way for the Prince of life! What it demonstrates as to man! You look at every verse of this section. I do not think there is a verse where someone does not attack and try to divert Christ from that pathway He was on. Think of what it meant! Even Peter had said, "This shall in no wise be unto thee", Matt 16: 22. And Jesus said, "Get away behind me, Satan", v 23. All was the enemy's work to deflect Christ. What meekness and what lowliness was seen in Christ. When they took His clothes off and put the scarlet cloak on Him, He just accepted it, even what it meant to have that scarlet cloak, and someone put that crown of thorns upon His head. Think about that! We are used to these terms, but someone would have taken the time and trouble to make that crown of thorns. What hatred is in the heart of man against Christ! Someone would have made it, even harmed themselves with these thorns, as they wove them together to make that crown. That is how much dedication, you may say, man has shown against Christ. Did that divert Christ? Did that change His love? For a mere man that would be beyond the pale, such insults when serving in such a way, but not Jesus. What was the answer to man's malice, man's hatred? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34. What a Man He is! What enduring love and suffering He went through!

Think of the whole band that was gathered against Him at the praetorium. There would have been about 120 men, heavily armed soldiers, standing round Jesus. What He went through! How terrifying it would have been, but He was standing there with these people round Him, and then they mocked Him in this way, putting a crown of thorns upon His head and a reed in His right hand; "and, bowing the knee before him, they mocked him". Think of who they are mocking! This is

Jesus; this is my Saviour; this is the King of kings, God in His own Person. “Hail, King of the Jews! And having spit upon him, they took the reed and beat him on his head”. What they did to the Saviour, but He “endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself”, Heb 12: 3. He still went through: what a Man He is! Does it not commend itself to you, beloved, that the love of the Christ should go this way for you?

“And when they had mocked him, they took the cloak off him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify”. They took Him to the place of a skull. “They gave to him to drink vinegar mingled with gall; and having tasted it, he would not drink. And having crucified him, they parted his clothes amongst themselves, casting lots. And sitting down, they kept guard over him there”. Think of the callousness of that, “sitting down” as though, you may say, this was another casual day. This is what they would routinely do. What a dark scene, not one ray of light, the chief priests mocking. They were the ones that were supposed to intercede for the guilty. That was their role. They were to intercede for the guilty, but they delivered up the Guiltless. What a thing it is! What Jesus would have felt! Think of Pilate himself washing his hands. He *knew* that Jesus was innocent; he *knew* that He had done nothing wrong. His own words testify to it; his wife's words testify to it as well (v 19); yet he washed his hands publicly, demonstrating that he *knew* what he was doing was wrong in delivering up innocent blood. And Jesus carried on and accepted it.

“The passers-by reviled him”, and the two robbers. “He was reckoned with the lawless”, Mark 15: 28. This is the One who had never done anything wrong. “This man has done nothing amiss” (Luke 23: 41), but “he was reckoned with the lawless”, given the judgment of a common criminal. Still Jesus went on. Then the mocking comes further. They could have well said, ‘Well, He is now on the cross, just leave it be; it is done now’. No, the mocking still continues: “Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou art Son of God, descend from the cross. And in like manner the chief priests also, mocking”. What behaviour for the chief priests! And they said, “He saved others, himself he cannot save”. Well, how true that was! It was not because of what they were saying, not in the manner that they would say, but because, as we sang in our hymn,

Love's stream too deeply flowed (Hymn 240)

If we ever were to have mercy from God, if we ever were to come to

know this One as our Saviour, if we ever were to enter into God's thoughts and designs for us, and God's thoughts for mankind, and that there might be an inheritance for God Himself, 'Himself He could not save', He had to go that way.

Himself He could not save,
He on the cross must die (Hymn 240).

There was no other way. The perfection of His life is not sufficient for the redemption of any one of us. He had to die. He had to die in this way. He had to be lifted up and He had to die. He accepted that terrible cup too, accepted it from the Father. What it meant for Jesus! Psalm 22 is very affecting.

Our fathers confided in thee: they confided, and thou didst deliver them.

They cried unto thee, and were delivered; they confided in thee, and were not confounded, v 4, 5.

It is a psalm of David and he is writing about "our fathers", obviously the previous generation or those in the past. They had trusted in God and were delivered. Jesus was not. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" There were those that "were delivered" and "were not confounded"; Jesus was forsaken. That is what had to happen to Jesus. He was abandoned, these three hours of darkness without one ray of light, but Jesus had to bear the judgment.

The sufferings from man, *awful* as they were, are not to be compared with the sufferings from God, the wrath of God poured out upon the head of Jesus, and Jesus accepted that. He took it because He knew it was His Father's will. He says, "not my will, but thine be done", Luke 22: 42. In John's gospel it says, "but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded me, thus I do. Rise up, let us go hence", chap 14: 31. Just before the crucifixion He accepted that that was the Father's will, and He loved to do the Father's will. What a terrible thing it was for Jesus! Have you thought about what it cost Jesus to bear your sins "in his body on the tree" (1 Pet 2: 24), what it meant for Jesus to bear those sins? It is beyond what we can understand and what we can fathom. There was darkness over the whole land to obscure it, but there Jesus bore those sins "in his body on the tree" and was made sin. He was made it. He confessed and bore those sins as if they were His own. What a thing that is! Think of Jesus having to bear those sins as though they were His own, the wrath of

God poured out upon His head. What God thinks about sins! We are so accustomed to the dispensation of grace, and it appears that sin abounds without immediate judgement, and despite has no doubt often been done to the dispensation of God's grace without regard as to God's view as to sin. But at this point, in those three hours of darkness, Jesus bore in His body those sins of mine, every single one. What a terrible thing! Think of hymn 238:

My sins - O the bliss of this glorious thought -
My sins - not in part, but the whole -
Were borne on the cross, and are gone evermore.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

Your soul does praise the Lord when you think about it. You think about Him removing that dreadful debt; Jesus did that. It was between Jesus and His God when the forsaking happened.

After that, He “gave up the ghost”, went into death, and in John's gospel we have it written as to His blood being shed. Think of that! On the one hand there was the most dreadful darkness in man. Christ had died, it was the callousness of man, pointless in itself, to come along and pierce the side of a dead Christ. What a thing that was for that man to do. Why? It just showed brutality against Christ even when dead, but what was the divine answer? “Immediately there came out blood and water”, John 19: 34. Think of that, the blood which can cleanse from every sin: “without blood-shedding there is no remission”, Heb 9: 22. The blood has been shed and it has been seen by God, and myriads have sheltered under it. Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? We read about the Lamb in the reading, “a Lamb standing as slain”, Rev 5: 6. Think of that! What a contradiction, you may say. How can something be standing which was slain? But it was standing, and it is seen in the heavens upon the throne “standing as slain”. It reminds you of Samson: there were more slain in his death than in his life, Judg 16: 30. What a victory Jesus secured in going into death and rising again, three days and three nights in the grave, and then rising again, now a living, exalted, glorious Man. His love is still the same. His love would be towards you now. The love of the Christ is still the same; it has never changed; it can never change; it is inexhaustible. It is something rich, beyond words to speak about, but it is there and it is there for you to experience. He would plead to you that if there is any here who does not know Him as Saviour that you would come to know Him. What a heart of love Jesus has! He has time for you. There is nothing too much

trouble.

I wanted to touch in closing on this very testing scripture in 2 Corinthians 5, “For the love of the Christ constrains us”. What a thing that is, the love of the Christ constraining! Think of its power that holds us! It is not a restraint; it is constraint. It is the attractive holding power of Christ. Is Christ attractive to you? Is His love attractive to you? Is it something which is a wondrous attraction and pull on you? That is His constraining power. “Having judged this: that one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them and has been raised”. Well, we cannot do that in our own power. It must be through the gift of the Holy Spirit to know the enjoyment of this life, a life on the other side of death.

It is a wonderful thing to consider that when Christ was raised from the dead there was new life. The order of man goes through, and there is a new life. Think about the condition that was laid down but that Man has gone through, and we live in the power of that life. How precious that is! It says in the beginning of Peter, He “has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead”, 1 Pet 1: 3. Think of being “begotten ... again”. There is something in you that is entirely new; it is a new creation; it is entirely new. It is not turning over a new leaf; it is entirely new, of God, and that “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”. Do you realise your link is with Him on the other side of death? What a precious thing that is to consider that your link is with a Man in the glory, an exalted Man, living in heaven, and the Spirit here gives you the enjoyment of that. He is “the earnest of our inheritance”, Eph 1: 14. What a power, and what blessing we have been brought into through the gift of the Holy Spirit!

I trust that all will have a distinctive impression as to “the love of the Christ”, and that there might be results from it, for His Name's sake.

Loanhead

7th September 2025

CONSIDERING THINGS

Rodney Brown

1 Corinthians 1: 26-29

Hebrews 3: 1, 2; 12: 1-3; 13: 7, 8; 10: 23-25

What comes into the scriptures that I have read is the matter of considering things. We are reading Hebrews locally and have read Hebrews 3 where we are exhorted to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession”. In looking at that scripture, profitably, a week or so ago, it occurred to me that I had not considered that enough and that there are things that always bear consideration. It is very easy to find your mind and your energy taken up with things that are not in themselves wrong but are not profitable. If Scripture tells us to consider something, you can be sure it is worth considering. If Scripture exhorts us to consider things, it is because there is benefit for us and glory for God as we do so. I have to say that I have not considered things sufficiently but I can say that if in any measure we do make time available, and the Holy Spirit helps us in doing so, it is never time wasted. I cannot say that about anything else that I use my time for. But in considering the Scriptures, considering the theme of the Scriptures, the Lord Jesus, and considering what is precious to Him and His saints, those with whom we are set, and the testimony, I think there is profit and there is blessing and not just for time, but it will have a result in eternity because we are in a time of formation, and formation does not come about by reading about current events and being taken up with them; that is not going to result in “an eternal weight of glory”, 2 Cor 4: 17.

Benefit and profit come from considering what is of interest to God, and that must be what relates to the Lord Jesus Himself. So, I am simply setting this out because I know there is benefit in doing so and that it is profitable and a positive exercise for us all. And it is *uplifting* when we do make time and prove the Spirit's help in doing so. It is *uplifting* to be engaged with the things that we were engaged with in the reading and to realise that they are ours, that they belong to us. The Holy Spirit makes them *real* in our hearts. We talked about what yet awaits us in a coming day, but the Spirit is “the earnest of our inheritance”, Eph 1: 14. That is, He gives us the benefit and the experience in some way, a foretaste of it now, and He does that in an adverse scene, and, as we lay ourselves open to the Holy Spirit, all

these things are so.

So, we are exhorted to consider these things, and it is an exercise for me to make sufficient time available to do so. We benefit from being together. We consider things as we are together, but I think the intention is that there should be consideration of these things in our personal lives, in our private time, that they should so lay hold of us that we form habits, good habits. We have read of a habit that is not good, "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together", but there are such things as good habits, and we can set ourselves for these things, and that relates to considering things rightly. And the enemy hates when we do that. The enemy wants to engage us with things that we can explain away, that are legitimate, where we think that there is no harm in them. The enemy will gladly let us engage our minds with these things and really, in considering, it is our minds that are essential. They are the way to our hearts, but we need to think on things. Paul could say, "Think of what I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things", 2 Tim 2: 7. The Holy Spirit, who Himself is God, and indwells believers, can help us in these things. He does not force these things on us; we need to make way for Him. Everyone here, I trust, knows something of what I am talking about. The Holy Spirit loves to open these things up. We had a reference in the reading to John 16 where the Lord Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, "but whatsoever he shall hear he shall speak", v 13. Elsewhere in John 16 the Lord Jesus says, "he receives of mine and shall announce it to you", v 15. Well, if we are not considering these things, we are not going to get the benefit of them, but there is great profit in being engaged with these things.

You might say that the present day is a difficult day and there is a lot to take our attention, and so there is. I was reading something in relation to this. This is something that a brother said in service, 'He, the enemy of our souls, is making the world as attractive as possible. All kinds of astonishing things are being developed to hold our minds and to anchor our souls in this poor scene so that we might not be heavenly in our outlook though we have been called with a heavenly calling. When do you think that was ministered? 1951! Do you think that brother would have any idea about the 'kinds of astonishing things' that hold our attention? This has been the enemy's work from the beginning of time. The exercises that we face are different. The exercises that you have will be different from the exercises I face or have faced when I was your age, if you are younger than me, but essentially it is the same

exercise. 1951 is some time ago. I wonder what these 'astonishing things' were! I do not think we would find them too astonishing now, but nevertheless Satan would try to take our minds away from the things of God, rob the saints of our heavenly portion, our heavenly calling, engage us with things down here rather than engaging us with Christ where He is in glory. That is where the Spirit is ordering our gaze; that is where we are going to spend eternity. Does it not become saints, believers in the Lord Jesus, to make time to consider things that are profitable, that fit us for that day? We have been called with a "heavenly calling".

I want to speak about three things we are to consider: our calling; our confession; and our conversation. The calling is a tremendous thing, which lifts our view to what we were discussing in the reading. That is what our calling relates to, being "conformed to the image of his Son", Rom 8: 29. It does not involve us in things down here but has its *effect* down here, and we will come on to that. What a calling it is! It is described in the Scripture where we have read as "the heavenly calling". It is also described elsewhere as "a holy calling" (2 Tim 1: 9) and as "the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus", Phil 3: 14. It does not relate to this scene. It relates to a scene of blessing where the Lord Jesus is, and we are to "consider" our "calling", brethren. When did you last "consider your calling"? I would challenge myself as to that. Is it sufficiently attractive, is it sufficiently central in your life, that you consider it as you should? I am sure many here are further on in this than I am, but I would just seek to stimulate interest and encourage the saints to go in for the things that God has prepared for us, "prepared for them that love him", 1 Cor 2: 9. If your affections are engaged in these things, you will find the time to go in for them. It is easy to be diverted, and it is easy to stand up here and speak about them, but the test comes on Monday morning with the pressures of work or whatever other reason I find to divert me from these things. Obviously, we have to find our way through here, but I would seek to engage us with what is heavenly because it is profitable; it is beneficial; and there is blessing in it; but more than that, that is what God is looking for in His people at this time.

So, our calling: it says, "there are not many wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many high-born". But God has *chosen* certain things that the world thinks nothing of. Well, that is a test because we do not like to be held in low esteem by the world, but the

calling dignifies persons. The calling dignifies me and it dignifies you, and what blessing there is in meeting together where we have been set, in our local places with those that are called saints, that is, saints by divine calling. It dignifies persons, and engenders respect. We spoke about that in the reading, how things that we were engaged with have an effect horizontally, that is, among the brethren, between one and another; but what blessing it is to be engaged in these things. Well, God may have chosen a certain way to make these things known. It does not say there are not any wise; it says, "there are not many wise according to flesh", but, dear brethren, we are not looking at this in relation to flesh or the world's view. We are looking at it from the divine side, and the calling relates to what is heavenly and eternal, and it behoves us to be engaged with that.

In Hebrews we have something about the calling in chapter 3. "Holy brethren" - there is the dignity that the calling confers on persons - "partakers of the heavenly calling". So we partake in it; we have fellowship together in it; we enjoy it together; we were partaking of it in the reading and enjoying what was coming in, relating to the Lord Jesus where He is because that is where our heavenly calling relates to, the Lord Jesus where He is.

We have to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus", that personal name. Is that not attractive? Does that not warm your heart that such a One, "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" is Jesus, the One who suffered, the One who died, the One that you have come to know, that loved you and gave Himself for you? That blessed One is "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession". So, it is a "heavenly calling"; it is a high calling; it is a "holy calling", but "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" relates to how that is worked out down here. The "confession" relates to earth, but we have "such a high priest", as it says elsewhere in Hebrews (chap 7: 26), to help us in that. So, the Apostle sets out God's mind as to things and the High Priest maintains us in relation to what the Apostle sets out. "The Apostle and High Priest" for us is Jesus; it is the same Person. Moses was the apostle and Aaron was the high priest for the children of Israel, and at times they did not act as one. There is no suggestion of failure, clearly, with our Apostle and High Priest. The One that we are considering is Jesus. Mr Raven says the Apostle is like the revelation of God and the High Priest is our approach in response. Many here will have heard that the response is equal to the revelation.

It must be so because the Apostle and High Priest is Jesus; it is the same Person. He maintains things in perfection; He has made these things known; He has come out from God with them and set them out authoritatively. Think of Him inaugurating things as the Apostle! He has done so. He has set out the thing in its perfection. But then the High Priest, the same One, He ensures that the response is equal to that. He maintains the saints at the height of their calling. We were reminded of that too, another of Mr Raven's statements, that the Apostle maintains the calling at its height and the High Priest maintains the saints at the height of their calling, vol 16 p44. Are you conscious of that? These might appear to be complicated things but, essentially, as you rely on the Lord Jesus, He can help you in these things, help you understand, and as we consider Him, that is the secret of it. The ministry that has come down to us is clearly helpful, but you have to consider the Person. How attractive it is that it is all in a blessed Person, a blessed Man, and that Man is Jesus. I would seek to engage you with Him, "Apostle and High Priest of our confession". Jesus, "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession", is how we prove Him here. You might say the confession is here but it is directed in accordance with the calling. The calling dignifies the confession.

What can we say about the confession? It involves what we say. We know that we have come into salvation through believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth, Rom 10: 9. Blessed matter! It really involves the testimony here, and the testimony is maintained by One who is the "High Priest of our confession". But it is more than what we say: it is what we are. Mr Raven said, 'I do not care for a man's doctrine if his manner of life does not correspond', vol 9 p483. Does that strike home? Our confession is to be in keeping with our doctrine. I am not saying that because I think that is not the case, but it struck home to me because so much has come down to me, others have maintained things through relying on "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession". Things have come down to us in the Holy Spirit. What have I done with them? Have I in any way taken them on? Have I in any way passed on an impression of them to the following generation? That is all involved in "our confession". It involves the way we are together but it involves what we are when we are not with each other. It involves what we are in the testimony, when we are out without the brethren seeing us but with "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" with us, able to help us, able to maintain things and maintain us we have resource in Him; we have resource in the Holy

Spirit. That is a tremendous thing, to be able to pass through this scene conscious of our calling, because that gives colour and character to our confession if it has laid hold of our lives, and we are thankful to be in a company where this is so. But I need to be exercised that it remains the case and that there is something that can be seen that is in keeping with such a calling as this.

Well, Hebrews 12 was referred to in the reading. These verses are encouraging, particularly the exhortation to look “stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith”. It does not say there ‘considering’ but “looking stedfastly” is closely aligned to that. The note is often referred to, ‘It means, looking away from other things and fixing the eye exclusively on one’, note ‘d’. Who are we to fix our eye exclusively on? On Jesus, that personal name again. It comes out in Hebrews. How attractive it is, “the leader and completer of faith”. You will never regret “looking stedfastly” on Him. He has set the matter on and completed it. What a glorious One He is!

But what has it cost Him? “In view of the joy lying before him, endured”, and that is one of the things we have to consider, “him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself”. No one has endured like the Lord Jesus. Saints go through things, and we feel for one another as that is the case. Body feelings are extant among the saints, and we are glad of them and we feel for each other and we rejoice with each other. Often body feelings come to light when persons are facing exercises and difficulties. Well, in any difficulty we can “consider well him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself”. There was nothing in Him to call out that contradiction; there was nothing in Him to call out enmity from these sinners “against himself”, but He endured, and He went through with it. There is another footnote, to “consider well”; “Weigh so as to judge its value”, and sometimes in comparison with other things’. Here we are to “consider well him”. It seems to be an additional emphasis on considering, ‘Weigh so as to judge its value’. Have you considered the Lord Jesus in that light, and what conclusion have you come to? We have been occupied in the reading with heaven’s conclusion, and I know that I am addressing a company that holds the Lord Jesus in their affections.

What about the endurance of this blessed One? Have you thought about it? Think of Him enduring! The copper in the altar speaks of it, I think. Think of what He bore! Think of what He was able

to withstand. He “endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself”. It should touch us in our affections, draw our hearts out in relation to that blessed Man who has “endured so great contradiction”, not on His own account but because of me and because of you, and so that God may have His desires in those that are His. “That ye be not weary, fainting in your minds” almost implies that if we do not consider things as we are enjoined to in the Scriptures, we will lose appetite to do so. We will become “weary”; we will faint; we will not be maintained in energy and in life, the requisites for the enjoyment of things here and the enjoyment of our heavenly portion, our heavenly calling. I can say from experience that obviously this is so. If I do not think about the Lord Jesus enough, it is not that my mind becomes weary, but, as occupied with other things, I am faint and I am weary and I cannot find the time or the energy or the desire to look into spiritual things. Well, it needs a fresh look at “him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself”; so He is the answer to this weariness and fainting. He would maintain us in life; He would maintain us in reality; and it is encouraging when we come across other believers that we walk with, and sometimes that we do not, that have this life and are happy to speak about it. I was stopped in the street in Glasgow last week by a woman who gave me something. She did not say much, and I looked at it and said, 'Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus?'. She said, 'Yes, He makes me live'. What an encouragement that was; so the Lord Jesus makes us live, gives us life, quickens us in our affections after Himself. What a blessing it is! And as we consider Him “well”, we have the wherewithal not to be weary and not to faint in our minds.

The next scripture is in chapter 13: 7. I am not sure if there is too much of a difference to be made between the “confession” and the “conversation”. Again, the footnote 'n' says, 'conduct,' 'manner of life'. This relates to leaders that have led and are no longer available, who have been taken to be with the Lord. There is another reference to leaders, who are current leaders, v 17. We were reading Hebrews 4 last Lord's day. It speaks there about “the word of God” being “living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword”, v 12. The hallmark of leaders in the context of this chapter here is that they “have spoken to you the word of God”. What a blessing has come about as a result! It is not just that they 'have spoken the word of God', but “they have spoken **to you** the word of God”, almost as if it is that “living and operative” word that has had entrance and divides in the way that we read of in Hebrews 4. We have known persons like that, and we have

benefited from teaching that has come down to us. We have benefited from written ministry, which also bears this stamp of speaking to us the word of God. If you are reading ministry in the Spirit, you can feel your affections being engaged and a quickening touch coming in. The ministry could have been written long ago. I have quoted from ministry that was given in 1951 by a brother that I had never heard of before, but that spoke to me. That is what the word of God can do, and those that speak “to you the word of God” have your blessing in mind. Sometimes it may be that you do not want to hear it. I know I have been like that, but I can tell you I am thankful now for those “who have spoken to you the word of God”.

That is one thing, but then “considering the issue of their conversation” - their 'conduct', their 'manner of life' - “imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”. There are persons that have gone before and there are brothers and sisters that we can still take account of and they are not all older than ourselves, speaking for myself, that not only speak to us “the word of God” but we can “consider the issue of their conversation”. So, what is “the issue of their conversation”? “Conversation” is not simply what we say: it is our 'manner of life'; so, what issues from the manner of life of such persons? Well, it is what we can take account of. I probably could not tell you a great deal about what some person said, although I could recognise that it was the word of God when I received it, but I can tell you about their manner of life, and their manner and the spirit in which they conducted themselves, and the piety that marked them and that is a test.

We had a word locally on piety a month or two ago, and it was a real test because it is something that I can say has marked generations that have gone before. It is to mark every generation. It is not something that is not fashionable anymore; it has never been fashionable; but there have been generations that have been marked by this, and it comes down to us as to our 'manner of life', to persons that are my age, to persons that are younger than me. What does our 'manner of life' tell about what motivates our life and what makes us live? What does it tell about Jesus Christ? What does it tell people when we are here in testimony about Jesus Christ, the One who is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and to the ages to come”? Our life and our calling relate to Him, and we will be like Him, and this is the time in which these features come out.

Well, very briefly, in chapter 10, we “consider one another”, and I appreciate what was brought into the reading about receiving “one another” (Rom 15: 7): that phrase again. We are in a company where we are comfortable with “one another”, those with whom God has set us. Would that there were more, but we are thankful for those we have. Well, we are to “consider one another for provoking”. It is easy to provoke in the wrong sense, but here we have “provoking to love and good works”. I did not have anything in mind about “forsaking the assembling of our selves together” but just to get to “but encouraging one another, and by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near”. That in itself is an encouragement, and we can engage each other with these things, but we are to “consider one another”. What a joy it is to do so, with those who have been dignified by the heavenly calling. We all have the same calling in that sense. We have to “consider one another for provoking to love and good works”. Have you been the recipient of this, beloved brethren, beloved brother, beloved sister, young person? I can certainly say that I have been, and it has an effect, a formative effect. It has an effect of not only drawing us closer together, but it results in what is pleasurable to the God and Father who has set it all on because if we are “provoking to love and good works”, where do we see “love and good works” exemplified but in the Lord Jesus Himself? And what pleasure He afforded to heaven.

“And by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near”: there is not long left in this dispensation; the day is drawing near. What a day it is going to be! In the waiting time we have been given one another to consider. We have been given so much to occupy us positively. It is precious to heaven, precious to the Lord Jesus, and the enemy is set dead against it, but we have the resource here to be sustained. “The Apostle and High Priest of our confession” is more than a resource: He is the One that is our life. May we go in for these things! May we be encouraged, and may we set ourselves to encourage one another and to provoke to “love and good works”, encouraging one another as that day draws near.

May it be so and may the Lord bless the word!

Linlithgow

27th September 2025

