

Duane Cramer - The Lamb

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Our plan is to talk about Jesus the Lamb, his resurrection, his death, and the importance of our faith in both doctrines.

I'd like to open this lesson by reading the convention theme text from Revelation 5:12, saying with a loud voice with worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. The Lamb in this text is also identified as the one who was first resurrected to the divine nature.

First Peter 1, 3, 4, 5 from Darby. The Darby translation Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance reserved in the heavens for you who are kept guarded by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. We'd like to consider two words from that text. One is the word resurrection, which is in the Greek is number 386 Anastasis A standing up again, that is literally a resurrection from death. Now Thayer adds, a rising from the dead.

So this is referring to Jesus own resurrection, which really becomes the basis our inheritance. The second word is unfading. Inheritance, which is in the Greek number 2817 is the word heirship, and that is a patrimony or a possession. The etymology of inheritance is that which comes from the Father. So putting these two thoughts together, the inheritance is through the resurrection of Christ and from the Father.

Think about it. In other words, God has begotten us to a living hope and to an incorruptible inheritance through the resurrection of Jesus, and that this inheritance is being secured by God's power.

In verse one, Peter is praising God when he says, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is praising God for giving the saints a real hope through the resurrection of Jesus. The apostle is also praising God for the arrangement whereby the saints are begotten again to a new life, to life on the spirit plane. Well, this gives them a living hope, a real hope of immortal life. The foundation of this hope, then, is Jesus resurrection, which means that if we are faithful, we will have the same opportunity for immortal life that was given to Jesus.

Well, Peter goes on in verses 4 and 5 praising God as he describes this inheritance, and he writes, the inheritance is incorruptible. It can't decay, it's undefiled, meaning it's pure, it's not polluted, it's unfading it won't lose its beauty or its value over time. Kind of reminds us of the text in 1 Peter 5. Four, when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of life that fadeth not away.

And fourthly, reserved in heaven, safe and secure by God's power.

So Peter was reminding the brethren back then that despite their own sufferings and difficulties and hardships, they do they did have an eternal inheritance. They have a living hope secured by Christ's resurrection. Peter is also reminding us that this same hope should shape our present conduct and how it should give us strength through our trials that we too might endure.

The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:20, but now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept, and Paul also tells us that Jesus was dead and that he was the first to experience a resurrection to life by the Father's power. Well, as we come to understand the

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importance of Jesus resurrection in our own consecrated lives, the more we see why so much is revealed to us on the resurrection in the Scriptures. Without faith in the resurrection of our Redeemer, and without faith in the merit of his death as a satisfactory offering for sin on our behalf, how can we be certain about our own resurrection?

Well, that's a great question. The resurrection of Jesus is one of the most important lessons to us. In order for anyone to benefit from the death of Jesus, Jesus must rise from the dead. Jesus must be resurrected in order to be our Redeemer. Jesus said in John 14:19, Because I live, ye shall live also.

And it's good to remember that the brethren at that time were still natural men. Therefore they needed proof that would appeal to the natural mind, and also the message of our Lord's death and resurrection must be plain enough to be understood by themselves if they were going to pass it on.

Jesus was a man during his life on the earth. He left the heavenly glory so that he could become a human being. In Hebrews 2. 9 and John 1:14, we read, Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, was made flesh and dwelt among us. Though the apostle Paul speaks of the man Christ Jesus in 1 Timothy 2.

5, where it reads, for there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. So why did Jesus become a human being? Why would he want to do that? Well, I think in First Timothy 2. 6, Paul answers the question by saying, to give himself a ransom.

Or in the Greek the word for ransom is number 487 anti lutron. It means a redemptive price. It is made up from the word anti473, which means instead of or a substitution for and the second word is Lutron 3083, which means something to loosen with, such as a redemptive price. So Jesus took the place of Adam. Therefore by substitution the man Jesus was able to release or loosen Adam from the condemnation.

The penalty was in a sense transferred from the man Adam to the man Christ Jesus. So our Lord's life was transferred from the Logos in heaven to a human body here on earth, so that he could be our Redeemer. His body was not of Adamic stock, but separate, perfect, just like Adam was.

Well, why? So that he could give it for Adam give it as a sacrifice, as was the bullock of Leviticus 16, where the bullock represented the man Christ Jesus. Adam had sinned and Romans 6:23 says, the wages of sin is death. So death was a penalty on Adam. It was forever.

Had it not been for God's special arrangement whereby he would permit the death of another perfect human being to take the place of Adam, so that he could be released. The man Christ Jesus died so that Adam and his race could live. Our Lord is no longer flesh he gave that up as a ransom for man, having become a man for that very purpose. 1st Peter 3:18 from the dialogue For Christ being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit also in Philipians 2:7 9 but made himself of no reputation, that and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

So Jesus Christ is now exalted to the divine nature. Therefore Paul writes in First Corinthians 5:16 Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

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He was raised from the dead, a life giving Spirit being first Corinthians 15:45 the last Adam was made a quickening spirit, and a spirit is not a man. Jesus is no longer human in any sense or any degree. Therefore we do not expect ever to see him again as a human being. He is resurrected as a spirit being on the divine plane. Well, the question then becomes back then, how would he convey this to his disciples?

How will they learn about his change, his resurrection from human to spirit? Which of his disciples would he begin with? What would he say? How would he appear? How does a spirit being convince a human being?

Well, the Master knew how confused they would be when we read there in Zechariah 13:7, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. So during those 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension, he had a main concern. To reestablish their faith in him as the Messiah, he would have to prove to them in some way or manner his resurrection and his change of nature, that he is now an exalted spirit being, having all power in heaven and in earth, as we read in Matthew 28:18. But how would he do this? Well, most likely he would begin with those that were closest to him.

They recognized him as the Son of God, who went about doing good. They had watched him, they had copied him, they studied him, they were preaching him. They had great faith in Jesus. But as our Lord says in Luke 24:25, they were slow of hearing, and because they were natural minded men, not yet spirit begotten.

And also they may have recalled Jesus words in Luke 13:28, Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom. So it likely seemed natural to them to have assumed that at some point they would see Jesus. Because he was human just like they were. So they were inclined to think along earthly lines and not spiritual. So how would Jesus make even those closest to him understand that he actually was resurrected?

Well, there are several evidences. We think the Scriptures are helpful to help them and us to grasp this idea of a resurrection. Number one. The removal of his body from the tomb, and we read in Luke 24:2, and they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

These women were eyewitnesses. They saw that the physical body was not there. Number two. By the vision of the angels speaking of our Lord as risen in Luke 24:4 6, and it came to pass, as they were much perplexed.

Thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments, and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. The voice of the angels saying that he is not here, he is risen.

And perhaps a third, by the clothes and the napkins in their places, as though they had been laid aside by one getting up from a sleep in John 20, verse 6 and 7. Then cometh Simon Peter, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself.

So John here is using the details of physical evidence to help them process what they see. The grave clothes lying in an orderly fashion indicates that it was very unlikely that Jesus was taken. If he were stolen, they most likely would have taken Jesus in haste, still bound in the grave clothes. Nor was there any evidence that he had helped getting out of the clothes, unlike we read about

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Lazarus in John 11:44, who was likewise bound. But he had to have help to unbind him.

So during the 40 days until his ascension, Jesus further emphasized the lesson of his resurrection in several ways. We refer to his appearances and to impress this lesson of his resurrection more deeply, that our Lord was a spirit being now appeared to the disciples in bodies of flesh, which on at least one occasion he permitted to be touched. Additionally, he appeared in various other forms, once as a gardener, once once as a stranger on the way to Emmaus, and once as a stranger on the shore of Galilee. It was important to establish the fact of the resurrection among his disciples if they were going to be teachers, and it was important that each disciple be convinced of the resurrection.

And they were, some by words, some by actions, others by his voice. But each had enough proof to believe that Jesus was resurrected. Remember this in particular in John, verse 16, when Jesus said, Mary, and she turned herself and said unto him, Rabboni, and she knew right away it was the Master.

Thus his object in appearing to his disciples after his resurrection was to truly convince them that he who was dead is now alive, that they might go forth as witnesses to the fact of the resurrection, and also that their testimony might be a sure foundation for the faith of brethren later on. As we know, no man can come to God to receive the Holy Spirit without faith in Christ. It was necessary not only for the disciples then, but for all sins, including ourselves, that the evidence of the resurrection should be such that natural men could comprehend. The Holy Spirit had not been given yet, but they still had to be convinced of the resurrection.

So we find another confirmation of Jesus resurrection.

We read in Luke 24:45, 46, 48.

Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures, and he said unto them, thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and ye are witnesses of these things.

Another step in this confirmation of Jesus resurrection is found in John 20:19, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith unto them, peace be unto you, and Also in Luke 24:31, he vanished out of their sight. The human body of flesh and bones and its clothing, which appeared suddenly while the doors were shut, then disappeared in the same manner, dissolved into thin air. We might say Jesus was different now.

He could come and go as a spirit. Luke 24:39 reads, For a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have. Jesus had conveyed to the disciples several things. He was alive, he was resurrected. He was not a human being.

He could appear with different bodies. He was invisible and yet could manifest his presence and power in a variety of ways. He could pass through even closed doors. He could take on various appearances. He was not now limited as a human being.

The apostle Paul later his situation was a little different. In order that he might be an apostle, he had to be a witness too in Acts 22:15 for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. So he must see the Lord after his resurrection, and he was not one of those who

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saw the manifestations of the resurrection and presence during those 40 days. Therefore he was given a glimpse of the Lord, not in flesh and clothing as he had appeared during the 40 days.

In Acts 26:13, Paul was answering King Agrippa when he says, at midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven above, the brightness of the sun shining about me and them which journeyed with me. No doubt Paul saw him as a full spirit being 1 Corinthians 15:8, and last of all he was seen of me also as one born out of due time. Paul saw him as a glorious spirit being. Paul was a witness.

And what a wonderful and faithful witness he was. So as we overview the scriptural evidence of Jesus resurrection, we come to recognize the divine wisdom in how clearly the resurrection of our Lord was revealed to the apostles.

So one, that all of the apostles should be thoroughly satisfied personally and therefore reliable witnesses, and two, that the Lord's people thereafter might be able to believe the apostles testimony and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. Therefore, as we consider the resurrected, the glorified Jesus, we see him no longer the man Christ Jesus, but a partaker of the divine nature.

So then our Lord was put to death in the flesh. He was not quickened or made alive or resurrected in the flesh as the apostle declared. He was quickened and is now a spirit being of the highest order.

So what about us?

How important is it for us to be established in the resurrection of Jesus?

Well, we believe the proofs of Our Lord's resurrection from the dead are quite necessary to be kept in mind by the saints. Especially these proofs are indispensable to our faith in Jesus and to our growth as new creatures in Christ. We could not continue in the more mature developments of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit unless this foundation is well established and kept.

It also became necessary for us to know that Christ died and that he died for our sins. Then we could believe in him as our Redeemer. He therefore secured the right to be the life giver to Adam and to his posterity. He is the one who died and rose again so that he might be our justifier, our guide, our Lord, our helper, our advocate with the Father, and eventually the mediator between God and man.

You know, when you think about it, death is not understood by most of the world or even believed in by most people, and so, on the other hand, we must be established in what the Bible says about death, and especially if we truly believe in the doctrine of the ransom.

We would like to consider now several proofs of our Lord's death, and we believe that God has arranged it so that there are several very reliable proofs of Jesus death in Scripture.

Our first proof is that Jesus death was real. It was actual. The body and the Spirit of life were dead when his side was pierced with a spear. We are told in John 19:34 that blood and water flowed from the wound. This dissolution is really more than evidence.

It's a proof that death had taken place. How firm was was Jesus faith in His Father at this particular time? As a testimony of Jesus hope and confidence in Jehovah God, we read in Luke 23:46 and when Jesus cried with a loud voice, father, in thy hands, I commend my Spirit. How appropriate that

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he who always carried out the Father's will at any cost should have absolute confidence that in his death his new creature would be in the Father's care.

Is this true of us? Can we say, father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit? It should be.

It was God that raised our Lord Jesus from the dead. It is also God's power that will be exercised through Christ in bringing us to glory, honor and immortality. Our Lord was the forerunner. There were none before him that had ever been raised from the dead either to perfection on the human plane or the divine plane.

Jesus loud cry is regarded by some as from a person whose heart had ruptured. It would be reasonable when we consider the circumstances surrounding our Lord's betrayal, his denial, the condemnation the scourging, and finally the Crucifixion. In Reprint 4173, Section 4, Pastor Russell writes that in his judgment, the primary cause of his heart rupture was the withdrawal of divine fellowship. How powerful this loneliness was during this last hour in Matthew 27:46 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

This suggests the depth of our Lord's anguish. He was dying as a substitute for Adam. So the penalty was not only death, but also separation from God His Father. Jesus did everything right, and he was still cut off from the Father. Why?

Well, to be our substitute, he must suffer the full penalty as though he were a sinner. This included not only loss of life, but also a complete separation from all fellowship with the Father, even just for a short time. But there must come that time of complete separation.

A second proof. The centurion who had charge of the execution was apparently convinced of our Lord's death, and he reported this to Pilate the governor, and we read in Mark 15:39, 44, 45 and I'd like to read this from the diatlog, and when the centurion, which stood by over against him, seeing that he expired, said, truly this man was the Son of God, and Pilate wondered that he was already dead.

And having called the centurion, he inquired of him if he was already dead, and having ascertained from the centurion, he gave the dead body to Joseph.

A third proof is concerning the Joseph of Arimathea. From the dialogue we read Mark 15:43, that Joseph came, who was of Arimathea, an honorable senator, who himself also was was expecting the kingdom of God, taking courage, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

A fourth proof that we're anxious to prevent any spread of of the doctrines of Jesus. They remembered Jesus words respecting the resurrection and our Lord's preaching respecting the resurrection, and even though they had plus now that the disciples were alone, they might try to steal away this body and claim the resurrection of their Master. So as a precaution, they requested Pilate to seal the tomb and place a guard of Roman soldiers there. Well, Pilate refused to act officially, but he did seem to grant them the privilege of hiring some of the soldiers as watchmen.

In Matthew 27:62, 66 again from the Diatlog. Now on the morrow, which is after the preparation, the high priests and the Pharisees convened before Pilate, saying, sir, we recollect that the imposter said, while living after three days I will arise Command, therefore, the tomb be made secure till the third day, lest the disciples come and steal him, and say to the people, he is raised from the dead, and so the last error would be worse than the first, and Pilate said unto them, you have a guard.

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Go, make it as secure as you know how.

And departing, they secured the tomb with the guard having sealed the stone.

A fifth proof. His friends. His friends believed that he was dead and wrapped him in spices for burial in John 19:40 from the Diaglo. Then they took the body of Jesus with linen, clothes, with aromatics, as it was a custom with the Jews to embalm.

In their grief, however, they seemed to have forgotten his promise of a resurrection, so much so that even after he had risen, it was still difficult for them to accept it. Their minds had been upon the promise and the glory of the kingdom, perhaps, and so suddenly Jesus was arrested, convicted, and crucified.

A sixth proof he was regarded that the guards met with the elders and declared that the disciples stole his body while they slept. The guards had been bribed by the Jewish rulers to say, as we read in Matthew 28:12, 13, and being assembled with the elders and taking counsel, they gave a good many shekels to the soldiers, saying, say you that his disciples came by night and stole him while we slept? Well, this shows at least there were guards, and that they recognized that Jesus was dead.

And our final proof, the tomb in which Jesus was buried was a new one in which no one had been previously buried. So there could be no doubt as to the identity of the one who had risen in Matthew 27, verses 59:60, and Joseph, taking the body, wrapped it in pure fine linen, and he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had excavated in the rock from the diaglot.

Thus, through the Scriptures, we have a wonderful record of several reliable and honorable witnesses as to the resurrection of and death of Jesus.

The apostles went on to testify to the resurrection of Jesus and to preach the gospel truth in the name of the risen Christ. But in doing so, it cost them something. They did this at their own expense, with sufferings with stripes, imprisonment, and even death as a reward for their faithfulness. The apostles, being the honest men that they were, would certainly not preach the resurrection of our Lord if they themselves were not thoroughly convinced. Why would they insist on teaching the resurrection of the dead if they had the least doubt about it?

Why preach that all hope of Christ, all hope of forgiveness of sin, all hope of a future resurrection, if Christ had not risen unless they were absolutely certain the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead, but there be no resurrection of the dead, Then is Christ not risen and if Christ be not risen, then is your preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up. If so be that the dead rise not for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. Then if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept well let's take two points from these verses.

First of all, Paul proves that faith in the resurrection really is a part of our Christian doctrine, and secondly, having proved the doctrine, he shows that our Lord's resurrection is God's assurance

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of a resurrection for all mankind.

In 1 Corinthians 15:21 from the English Standard Version says, for as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

Continuing in 1st Corinthians 15:22 23 from the king James the apostle shows, for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order Christ the first fruits afterwards they that are Christ at his coming.

Well, this shows us that for those who come into Christ, into the household of faith, there will be more than one class, or more than one order. Each one in Christ will be fully raised up out of death in his own class. He really shows us the two classes, the first fruits, which certainly suggest later fruits or after fruits. The first fruit class the members of his body will be first, because associated with Christ in sacrificing during this present age, they shall be accounted worthy to have a part in the chief resurrection. Romans 6:5 reads, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:24 26 then will come the end, when he shall deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, all authority and power for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and the last enemy shall be destroyed when death how reasonable it will be for the world to be awakened, each will be given the necessary assistance to participate in a program that will lead them to perfection.

These will experience, if willing and if obedient, a gradual resurrection or raising up to the image and likeness of Adam and his original perfection. On the other hand, the Church has promised a resurrection in spirit bodies because they are the ones who are walking in the footsteps of Jesus. The begetting of the Holy Spirit leads them to a change of nature from earthly to spiritual. If they are faithful to their covenant, their resurrection will be to glory, honor, and immortality, as explained by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:43 44 it is sown in dishonor it is raised in glory it is sown in weakness it is raised in power it is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body.

Well, just think what has been revealed to us. We've just reviewed a description of the resurrection of what God has promised the world as well as what God has promised the Church. The Apostle Paul writes that the members of the church will fall asleep. But he also adds in 1 Corinthians 15:51 we shall not all sleep. Some will be alive and remain until the Lord's return.

These, however, will not be resurrected before the sleeping ones, and according to the apostle in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the dead in Christ shall rise first then we which are alive and remain shall be changed In a moment, 1 Corinthians 15:52 in the twinkling of an eye because 1 Corinthians 15:50 tells us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. So the resurrection of Jesus is absolutely necessary, that he might not remain dead, but be glorified, and in due time resurrect his church, and subsequently awaken and uplift all of the families of the earth.

Listen to the special promise in Revelation 26 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such that the second death hath no power but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

We also note the promise of the world's resurrection. In Acts 24:15 there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and again in John 5:28 and 29 from Darby Translation Wonder not at this for an hour is coming in which all in their tombs, and shall hear his voice and shall go forth those that have practiced good to resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to

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resurrection of judgment. Yes, even those that have done evil shall come forth that they may enjoy a resurrection brought about by judgments and disciplines, which will gradually develop in them a character into human perfection. Thus the human resurrection and spiritual resurrection are two different rewards showing two different salvations.

One is an earthly reward and the other is a spiritual reward, and how important it is for us to have a true scriptural understanding of the resurrection of Christ, because it is his resurrection that guarantees life on either the earthly plane or the spiritual plane.

So, dear brethren, let us remember that the reward well done, and the chief resurrection are not for those who have just a clear knowledge and a strong faith, but it seems to be for those who through their knowledge and by their faith become overcomers both in deed and in truth. The more we see that a complete resurrection is provided for all of Adam's race in our Redeemer's sacrifice, the more we can appreciate that sacrifice and the more we love our heavenly Father, his Son, our Master Jesus Christ, the more we understand this great sacrifice of our Lord, the more we will have this strong desire to serve, to serve him, to serve the heavenly Father, to serve one another. So let us count, as the apostle Paul did, that all other rewards are as loss, that we may win Christ. Philippians 3:7, 11 but what things were gain to me those I count loss for Christ? Yea, doubtless an I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus in my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

O what manner of persons we should be as copies of our dear Redeemer, in order to make our calling election sure we read in 2 Peter 3:11 seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?

In closing we read 1 John 3:1:3. This is from the Bible in basic English.

See what great love the Father has given us in naming us the children of God, and such as we are. For this reason the world does not see who we are, because it did not see who he was. My beloved ones now we are children of God, and at present it is not clear what we are to be. We are certain that as His Revelation. We will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

And everyone who has this hope in him makes himself holy, even as he is holy, and again, dear friends.

Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Can we say that it should be so? May the Lord add His blessing.