

# LIVING WATER - COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

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This is the first issue of what it is hoped will become a regular magazine to be published by the Stone Publishing Trust. The names and addresses of the trustees are given on the back page and enquiries, comments and proposed items for publication should be sent to any of the trustees. God willing a further complimentary issue will follow shortly.

Quotations from Scripture in this issue are normally from the Darby Translation or from AV.

## WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM COMING TO CHRIST?

"And it came to pass in those days that he went out into the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. And when it was day he called his disciples and having chosen out twelve from them, whom also he named apostles: Simon, to whom also he gave the name of Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon who was called Zealot, and Judas brother of James, and Judas Iscariote, who was also his betrayer; and having descended with them, he stood on a level place, and a crowd of his disciples, and a great multitude of the people from all Judaea and Jerusalem and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those that were beset by unclean spirits were healed."

Luke 6:12-18.

I would like you to think for a little while tonight about some of these men. What we have just read actually happened. These men were picked out by Jesus to be His twelve apostles. They kept in His company for three years and during that time they saw the most incredible things happen and heard the most amazing words spoken. The bible tells us of a light shining in Galilee (Isa. 9:1 and 2). These men lived with that light, with One who was greater than all the prophets that ever lived. Here was a Man who spoke God's word with authority and taught with power, so that all who heard Him were amazed. He was a Man clearly sent from God. These twelve men we read about were chosen to be with Him for three years and to hear what He had to say.

Think about Peter. One day Andrew, Peter's brother, had come to him and said, 'Come with me - I have found the Man who is the Messiah'. Think of how that must have sounded to Peter. He was going about his daily routine and his brother walked up to him and said, 'Come with me - I have found the Messiah, I have found the Man the whole nation of Israel has been looking for!'. Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Then on another day Peter was on the shore and Jesus came and spoke with him and got into his boat and taught there. Simon had been fishing and had been unable to catch any fish at all, yet when Jesus spoke the word he let down the net and caught more fish than ever he had imagined. There were so many fish that the net broke and they had to get their friends to help them to get the fish into the boats. When Peter saw it he fell at Jesus' knees. He recognised that here was a Man who had God's power and spoke God's word. He fell down before Jesus and he felt utterly worthless.

Peter was an ordinary fisherman; he had no expectations other than to fish and to keep his family for the rest of his life but he was called by the Son of God to be with Him and live with Him for three years. What he saw in those years so changed his life and so changed him inside that he carried on following Jesus for the rest of his life.

Peter saw his mother-in-law healed from a fever by Jesus. Maybe he had seen others healed before he heard the words of the Lord when He called him, "I will make you fishers of men". Think of what Peter experienced in those three years when he kept company with Jesus. They were years such as no-one else had ever had before.

All the twelve apostles saw wonderful things and I just want you to get this into your soul that the things the disciples saw were the testimony of God's love to humanity. They saw a Man whose delight it was in every moment of His life to please God. How different from you or me! Jesus loved God and honoured and obeyed Him in everything. His whole being was absorbed in doing the will of His God and Father. If you are a Christian, remember what you are like in your highest moments of praise, when your soul lifts itself to God in the power of the Spirit. Think of what you are like then, the amazing character of that experience for those few fleeting seconds when it is your soul's delight to praise God wholeheartedly, when your soul is absorbed with God and no other and you truly worship. Well, in Jesus, God had a Man here on this earth who led every day of His life, and every minute of every day, absorbed with pleasing God. There has never been a Man like Jesus before and there will never be anyone like Him since but the disciples had the experience for three years of living with Him and it changed their lives.

I wonder at all the acts of healing that they saw. Think of the distress there was in Israel at that time, the diseases, the unclean spirits which possessed people; think of all those people who had no hope but who came to Jesus and He healed them. How the apostles must have wondered as they saw the relief that Jesus brought to so many. They saw the hope that Jesus brought. Day after day they saw miracle upon miracle. They saw the power of God in Jesus Christ. He was consumed with love for His God and Father, yet His heart was going out in love for every minute of every day towards the men, women and children all around Him.

I do not know if you have ever met in your life any people that were particularly marked by love, love to you and to those around them. Well, great though such a thing may be, it is nothing compared to the love of Jesus. The disciples saw something very different from the spite and the jealousy, the selfishness and the pride that marks you and me and marks everyone else in this world. They saw, in contrast, a Man who

loved, and loved, and loved, and gave, and gave, and gave until he gave everything that He had, even His own life. For three years the apostles lived with a Man who was different from everyone else and they loved Him.

How they must have loved Him. They had left their families, their houses, their jobs; they had left all they were brought up with. How they must have been attracted to Jesus. There must have been something about Him that appealed to their hearts when He called them and said, "Come, follow me", and they followed Him. Peter had no doubt whatever that this was God's Man, that Jesus was truly the Son of God. The disciples had countless experiences that spoke to their hearts and demonstrated that Jesus was the Son of God, that everything He said and did was perfectly in keeping with God Himself.

Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain. They had there an experience outside of everyday life. They saw Jesus shining with the shining of heaven. They saw Him speaking with Moses and Elias, and they saw Him alone and they heard God speaking to them, drawing their attention to Jesus as His only begotten Son. Peter kept that experience and years later he spoke of being an eyewitness of the majesty of the Lord Jesus.

John was another disciple. He was also called by Jesus. John was in the boat when Peter was called by the Lord. He saw the huge catch of fishes, that early sign; John saw the thousands healed. He saw the relief that Jesus brought to so many. John saw the love and the hope and the light that Jesus brought to people's lives. John saw the lives that were changed and he was captivated by the Son of God. Like Peter, he lived in company with Jesus day by day for three years and he loved Him.

John grew to know the love of Jesus in such a way that he had a particular understanding in his heart of how much Jesus loved him. When John refers to himself in the gospel that he wrote he calls himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved". John knew, perhaps more than the others, how much Jesus loved him.

John followed Jesus day by day and he was there all along the pathway. He was there at the mount of transfiguration and he saw the glory. He was there in the journey up to Jerusalem. He was there when they came into Jerusalem and the crowds cheered their Messiah. He was there in the upper room when Jesus spoke those wonderful words recorded for us in John's gospel, words that speak of divine love as perhaps no other words in the bible do.

John was there at the cross. Think of how he must have felt; he must have been

bewildered because although Jesus had told the disciples time and time again that He would die, they could not bring themselves to believe it. Yet, John was there when Jesus was crucified. He was there on that hillside when Jesus suffered. He saw the blood and the water flow from the side of Christ. John was there when it happened. When you hear in the gospel the message that goes out that if you will trust in Jesus and His wonderful work on Calvary you are cleansed from your sin, washed completely through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, when you hear that, friend, remember that John was there. They are not just words to John. He stood there and he saw the soldier pierce the side of Jesus with a spear. He saw the blood and water flow, the blood that cleansed you from your sins for evermore in God's sight, if only you will believe. That precious, precious blood has made atonement for you. That blood cleanses anyone who will come in faith to Christ.

John is a witness; he says; 'I know these things are true, I am an eye-witness'. John, like Peter, spent the rest of his life preaching about Jesus and His wonderful work, a work which changed history for millions who have believed. Because that blood was shed, God has said that your sins are washed away if you will believe.

John was there. John knew about the trial and the scourging of Jesus; he knew Pilate's verdict had been "I find no fault in Him whatever"; John was there when they nailed Jesus to the cross and hung Him there to die. He must have been there when the darkness came, and it was dark for three hours, and in that time God's judgement was put upon Jesus for your sin, if you will believe. When John says that the blood is sufficient to cleanse you from your sins he is talking of something that he had seen and knew for himself.

John's life was so changed by Jesus that he finished it, as far as we know, in the salt mines on the isle of Patmos, dying for his faith, dying there because Jesus had changed his life. He had seen something in Jesus which was so different from anything else he had seen or heard before. He came to know God through Jesus Christ.

There is another man in the scripture we read at the beginning - Judas. He also saw the miracles, he saw the healing, he saw the people who came to Jesus in suffering and distress and went away shouting for joy. He saw the lepers cleansed; he saw all the women and children who had no hope at all, who came to Jesus and who were healed; he saw them healed and go away rejoicing. Judas saw men praise God for what Jesus had done. He lived in Jesus' company for three years, just as did James and John and Peter and the others of the apostles. He saw the love that flowed from Jesus Christ. He saw the light from God, he saw that life, he saw that love. He saw the love for God that was displayed in Jesus. He saw a life of holiness, and pureness,

and meekness and humility. Judas saw a life the like of which he could never had conceived, a life so very different from his own. He lived for three years in the company of a Man who was prepared to die for him, to die for his sins. He saw the same Man that James and John and Peter saw and he saw the same love. At the end of those three years he was given a choice - thirty pieces of silver or the life of Jesus, and he chose the silver!

Friend, this is the message I have got on my heart. Tonight God is speaking to you as you sit in your seat. God is appealing to you to open your heart to Jesus Christ. What is it, friend, that is keeping you from Jesus tonight? What is it that is worth more to you than Jesus? What was the worth of those thirty pieces of silver to Judas? Whatever could he do with thirty pieces of silver? But he chose them rather than Jesus Christ.

I know it was in God's ordering that Jesus came here, that He went to that cross, that He came here to die for your sins and mine, and that without this dying and bearing my sins I would have no hope. I know that! Yet Judas still had that choice and he chose the thirty pieces of silver.

Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter stood up to preach with a heart that was full of what Jesus had done for him. He had a wonder in his heart as knowing that his sins were gone - gone forever. What power and what joy there must have been in that preaching! But by the time Peter stood there Judas was dead! Friend, you do not know how long your life will be - it could end tonight! And, tonight, I am asking you, 'What is it that is keeping you from God? What is it that is keeping you from inviting Jesus into your heart?'

Is it your ambition? Is it money? Is it your hopes for this life? Is it your lust? Is it your pride? What is it, friend? Because whatever it is in your heart that is keeping you from Jesus it is worth nothing at all, compared to the peace and joy and happiness of coming to know Him.

Judas had lived in Jesus' company; he had lived with the Son of God. He had lived with One who loved him and he must have known it. Friend, tonight God is pleading with you. He may have pleaded with you before, but He is pleading tonight. Jesus loves you! He loved you enough to die for you. He loved you enough to go to the cross for you, and He wants you to know it and understand in your heart. He went there because God is a holy God and with your sins upon you, you have got no hope at all because God cannot have sin in His presence.

Jesus went to the cross, friend, that you might be cleansed from your sins, that they might be put away for ever if only you will let Jesus into your heart. My sins are gone because I have done that. They are gone because Jesus has suffered for them. He has already borne the judgement, He has paid my penalty because He loves me! Jesus knew that I had no hope as I was in my sins, yet He loved me, and He gave everything to save me. I have never met anyone in this world who has even begun to love me as Jesus loves me.

Friend, Jesus loves you! Tonight, will you come to Him? You may find it hard to believe. You may not be sure what you are being asked to believe; yet if you feel the need of Jesus in your heart, call out to Him! You can do that tonight because Jesus lives!

When Peter preached in those days after the resurrection he was not preaching about someone he had known and who had died and was gone. He had seen Jesus risen from the dead. He had seen Him and spoken to Him and he had such joy in his heart he must have been shouting for joy. Peter must have been bursting to tell everyone that Jesus lives! Peter knew that Jesus had died and had washed him in His blood and now he knew Jesus as risen from the dead and living for evermore. Peter was longing to tell everyone about Jesus and what He could do for their souls.

Peter preached and thousands believed in Jesus, and they wanted to tell others too. So for hundreds of years, from person to person, God's word has gone forth because generation after generation have found for themselves that it is true, that Jesus lives and that His blood cleanses from all sin.

I am standing here tonight, friend, because I have found that it is true, that the blood of Jesus has cleansed me from my sins and that Jesus certainly lives. When I pray I am not speaking to the air. When I pray it is to a Man who lives, to the Son of God who loved me and died for me and now He lives for me. Friend, what about you? Do you have that rock-solid certainty in your heart that you are forgiven, that your sins are gone? I don't mind how many Christian services you may have attended or anything like that, all I want to know is whether, in your heart, you know for certain that your sins have gone and that Jesus lives. Do you know it in your heart?

You see, Jesus does love you; and He really lives. If you call out to Him in the emptiness and need of your heart, He will not only hear you, He will give you the most certain assurance that He loves you, and He lives, and He will cleanse you from your sins. All you have to do, friend, is to call out to Him. Tell Him that you are a sinner and you want to be saved, and He will save you! That is God's promise, not mine!

## LETTER TO A SISTER ON HER MARRIAGE

July 18, 1892

My Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am sorry that I cannot be with you at your marriage and therefore I write to you. May you and dear \_\_\_ enter on this step with the Lord - a good beginning is essential. You may veer or be diverted from it, but the Lord does not forget and will recall you to it. The step you are now entering upon is God's appointment for the natural man, and therefore it is for him the happiest and best, but remember that the best order of things before the fall has suffered most by the fall. Man is utterly incompetent to preserve marriage in its original suitability. In a word, it is only by the power of God that marriage can be preserved according to God. If it were of man's invention it could be maintained according to man's mind. It requires the power of Christ in heaven to make marriage up to the mind of God. The better you understand the church's relation to Christ the better you will understand your relation to your husband. The more the church is merged in Christ, the happier and more effective it is in every way. The more you are identified with your husband in his interests, the more you will help him when he is right, and the more influence you will have in dissuading him when he is in error. It is the one who supports me best when I am right who has weight with me in correcting me, because I am sure of the interest he or she takes in me. If you wane in devotion you will wane in influence, and to maintain this influence you must make your company necessary to him and he will not act without your co-operation. If Rebekah had been more of a companion to Isaac she might have preserved him from Esau's venison! The Lord help you both much. Begin with the Lord and He will end with you. With much love to you both.

Ever your affectionate friend,

J.B. STONEY



## TAKEN INTO FAVOUR IN THE BELOVED

(Extracts from the ministry of F.E. Raven. The numbers given in brackets show the volume and page of the New Series volumes of "Ministry by F.E. Raven" published by the Kingston Bible Trust from which the extracts are taken.)

Nothing could fit me more absolutely or completely for the eye of God than Christ. Nothing is for God's perfect satisfaction but Christ. The best robe (Luke 15) is more than acceptance; it is the consciousness of acceptance. (9/18) 1895

... what do you see when you enter the holiest? The mercy-seat. (13/58) 1899.

We come into the holiest, not ignorant of God's ways, but in the knowledge of His ways, and that those ways have been declared in Christ. We have rest there in the presence of the One with whom we are associated in priestly service. Infinite, supreme love is there, and we are privileged to be there in association with that Man in whom God has been glorified. The First-born among many brethren. (13/59) 1899.

In the New Testament there is very little injunction or direction in regard of worship. In the Old Testament you get the most explicit instructions. I have often turned this over in my own mind really to satisfy myself about worship, and have come to the conclusion that there is little said about it, because it is all involved in access. We learn that through Jesus we both have access by one Spirit to the Father, and we get no more. All the difficulty with regard to worship disappears when we are conscious of being before God in the light of His love. If you have the sense of that which God is, and are before Him in that way, you could not want any direction in regard of worship. In worship Christ is the Leader. It is through Him we have access to the Father. (15/199) 1901.

... the thought of sonship is association with a glorified Christ; that of children is rather association with an unknown, rejected Christ. (7/115) London 1891.

"All of one" is association in the mind of God, all of one stock and origin, all of the love of God, "for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren". (Heb. 2:11) . . . . Association is, as I have said, greater than union; association puts you in company with the Son of God, . . . . (3/204) Peckham 1902.

You never can be united to the Son of God as such. Union is with the exalted Man . . . Sonship brings you into association with the Son of God. (14/92)

Sonship does not confer on us any present dignity that I can see: I am in the light of all the dignity that is in Christ. The dignity has to come out by-and-by; it is there, but it is no dignity to me down here. (9/168) Newport 1896.

First we apprehend the calling to sonship; then we see that sons of God are priests because they are sons. We have this thought in Hebrews, where Christ is spoken of as priest because He is Son. So with us, for who could have full access to God save sons? None but those who know God's love could fully enjoy access. It is sonship which enables us to be priests, and as such only are we priests. (11/319) 1898.

Sonship is greater than inheritance, though that will never so appear to one who does not know sonship. It is the greatest thing with God. What is the meaning of sonship? You are the objects of the love of God. (8/6) Exeter 1894.

The man who knows God best is most capable of approaching God. The One who now leads us to approach God is the One who perfectly knew and declared God. The Leader must be Christ; He not only sings praise to God in the midst of the church, but in the midst of the great congregation also; He must be the Leader of praise in every circle, or there could not be liberty and access. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared God, and now He sings praise to God. He is the most suitable One to do so. (14/181) Peckham 1900.

In the assembly you are nothing without love . . . when it is a question of the realisation of heavenly privilege nothing avails but affection. Christ loves me and maintains me in faith when I might otherwise break down; and now I love Him, and it is affection that helps me into privilege. (8/278) Quemerford 1895.

The declaration of God is perfect in Christ having descended, and approach to God is perfect because Christ has ascended. (19/468) Peckham 1903.

"Now are we children of God". (1 John 3:2) It is a great point to bear in mind. You will never have the relationship more really than now, and the Holy Spirit witnesses to it. (8/181) 1894.

It is a great thing for a saint to know that he is accepted by God apart from works entirely. He has accepted you in regard of a scene which will be according to His pleasure, and when God reveals that scene, His acceptance will come to light. In that day you will have glory with Christ. (7/58).

The blood being carried into the holiest (Lev. 16:15) conveys the thought to me that man is going into the holiest. I cannot see any other object than that in blood going in there; . . . (16/284) Peckham 1902.

(The Stone Publishing Trust hope to have available shortly a collection of extracts from the service of F.E. Raven).

### **OUR SINFUL SELF** **Extracted from "The Believer Established"**

A certain man clings to us; go where we will he follows us; and he is continually tripping us up. If we could only run away and leave him, what a relief it would be! I have heard of a man who made up his mind to go out of the way of temptation that he might lead a perfectly holy life. So he built a hut in the middle of a wood, took a supply of bread and a large jug of water and sought to shut himself up where no evil could follow him. He shut the door with great delight, rejoicing to think that he had left the world and sin outside, and he was so happy that he fell on his knees to thank God that he was delivered at last. Alas! in the act of kneeling down he kicked his water jug over, and something came out of his lips which was neither thanksgiving nor prayer! With a sad and disappointed heart he got up and went home, having made the discovery that his greatest enemy was a man from whom he could not run away.

I see that many of you quite understand an experience like that. We have to learn that as children of Adam we belong to a bad stock, and this is a very different thing from being convicted of the guilt of our sins. It is of vital importance that each young believer should learn this lesson.

### **THE EYES IN THE WHEELS**

"The appearance of the wheels and their work was as the look of a chrysolite . . . As for their rims, they were high and dreadful; and they four had their rims full of eyes round about".  
(Ezekiel 1:16 and 18)

Those wheels move on with infinite accuracy, the wheels of divine government. Nothing escapes the notice of the government of God. We need have no anxiety as to the course of this world. We are sympathetic with them, we pray for them, for kings and for all men; but the government of God goes on outside of that with infinite accuracy. There is not a thing that happens under the sun without its being noticed by the eyes in the rims of the wheels. Everything will be weighed in the divine

balances. Nothing that has occurred from Adam to the end of time but will be weighed with infinite discrimination, and all will be perfectly adjusted in the government of God. We do well to take notice of that.

The book of Ezekiel is written to set the hearts of the godly at rest. The awful things that are happening will come under the unerring government of God, and all will be dealt with according to the infinite knowledge and discrimination of God. I refer to that so that you may understand that in pre-occupation with Christ and the things of Christ you may be assured, at the same time, that all that goes on around us is being taken care of by God.

SELECTED POEMS BY GERHARDT TER STEEGEN

MY ROBE IS CHRIST

Lord Jesus, all my sin and guilt  
Love laid of old on Thee,  
Thy love the cross and sorrow willed,  
Love undeserved by me.  
The victory over death and hell  
Thou, Lord, for me didst win;  
And Thou hast nailed upon Thy Cross  
All, all my sin.

The way into the Holiest Place  
Stands open now to me;  
Where I can see Thy glorious Face,  
Nor tremble thus to see.  
For as I am to Thee I come,  
I clasp Thy blessed Feet,  
And learn the mystery of love  
So deep, so sweet.

Enfolded, O my Lord, in Thee,  
And hid in Thee I rest,  
Enwrapped in Christ's own purity  
Secure upon Thy breast.  
Had I an Angel's raiment - fair  
With heavenly gems unpriced,  
That glorious garb I would not wear,  
My robe is Christ.

## THE SIN OFFERING

Wouldst thou know if Jesus loves thee?  
If He loves thee well?  
See Him suffer, in the darkness  
Pains that none can tell,  
Smitten, bearing in thy room  
All thy guilt, and all thy doom.

Mine the sin, O mighty Saviour,  
Laid by God on Thee -  
Mine eternal condemnation  
In Thy Cross I see -  
In Thine agony divine  
See the curse that else were mine.

See the conquest and the triumph  
Thou for me hast won;  
Justice satisfied for ever,  
All God's pleasure done.  
Thus, O smitten Rock! from Thee,  
Life eternal flows to me.

## THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME

Name of Jesus! Highest name!  
Name that earth and heaven adore!  
From the heart of God it came,  
Leads me to God's heart once more.

Name of Jesus! living tide!  
Days of drought for me are past;  
How much more than satisfied,  
Are the thirsty lips at last!

Name of Jesus! Dearest name!  
Bread of Heaven, and balm of love,  
Oil of gladness, surest claim  
To the treasures stored above.

Jesus gives forgiveness free,  
Jesus cleanses all my stains,  
Jesus gives His life to me,  
Jesus always He remains.

Only Jesus! fairest Name!  
Life, and rest, and peace and bliss;  
Jesus evermore the same,  
He is mine, and I am His.

## GREAT JOY

I was a fisherman for over 8 years prior to joining the police force in November 1990. In January 1990 while I was living in Elgin, something wonderful happened to me that was to change my life completely.

Let me first tell you that I was married to Gwen, I had a son Martyn aged 4 and another one on the way. I had good health, a house, a good job, a car and yet I knew something was missing in my life.

A close friend, Brian More had been a crewmate with me for over 3 years aboard the fishing boat St. Kilda. We'd worked, laughed and shared each others company at home and at sea. In November 1989 Brian became a Christian, he'd been saved. Since that time our friendship ended, I ridiculed him, laughed at him, mocked him and completely ignored him.

One stormy night at sea, Brian was on watch with me and as we dodged North of the Butt of Lewis I asked him about what being a Christian meant. He began to tell me about Jesus and His cruel death on the cross, His resurrection and our need to get right with God so that we may be forgiven our sins.

Although I had always attended Church, these words, the good news took on a new meaning. It was personal as if God was speaking to me.

That night I went to my bunk and I couldn't sleep; not because the boat was rolling about but because my heart felt burdened with sin, guilt and shame, it was as if a huge weight had been placed upon it.

Next day we landed our catch at Lochinver and Brian and I went up to the Fisherman's Mission. I always remember going to the door of the Mission and knocking at it and waiting for an answer. It would have been easy to turn back but I knew I had to get right with God.

The Superintendent, also named Brian, explained what I needed to do to get right with God and together we prayed. At 11.00pm on January 24th, 1990 I prayed to God asking His forgiveness for my sins, trusting Him and believing Jesus died on that cruel cross, suffering and bearing my sins and shame; and also believing that Jesus after three days rose again so we may have Eternal Life. I asked the Lord to come and live in my heart as my personal Saviour. He did!



Words can never express the feeling in my heart that night and I praise the Lord for saving me.

When I told my wife she was quite hurt. Since being married we had done everything together but this was something you had to do alone; I had left home "lost" and returned home "saved".

My first prayer on becoming a Christian was that God would save my wife. Three months later in the quietness of her bedroom she asked Jesus into her heart.

I could write a book about the changes and wonderful things Jesus has done for me, but I would like to share 3 of these.

Firstly being a Christian does not exempt me from problems and difficulties but what a privilege it is to bring them to the Lord in prayer and He answers them. The second is that before my wife and I were saved we thought we were in love; we were very close and enjoyed each others company but let me say that until we'd experienced the love of Jesus we hadn't even begun to appreciate what love meant. And thirdly is this, that what a great joy it is to live knowing when we die, as we all must, we have the glorious hope of spending eternity with Jesus.

(Extracted from the "Fisherman's Gospel Manual" which will be available shortly. Enquiries should be made to Graham Mair, 9 High Street, Portknockie, Banffshire, Scotland, AB56 2LP).

### WHAT THEY SAID OF JESUS

He changed sunset to sunrise.

Clement of Alexandria 150 - 220

They should have known that He was God. His patience should have proved that to them.

Tertullian 150 - 230

As the print of the seal on the wax is the express image of the seal itself, so Christ is the express image - the perfect representation of God.

Ambrose of Milan 340 - 397

I have read in Plato and Cicero sayings that are very wise and very beautiful; but I never read in either of them: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

Augustine of Hippo 354 - 430

Anything that one imagines of God apart from Christ is only useless thinking and vain idolatory.  
Martin Luther 1483 - 1546

Jesus Christ is the centre of all.  
Blaise Pascal 1623 - 1662

All my theology is reduced to this narrow compass - "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."  
Archibald Alexander 1772 - 1851

Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the senses decay, the world changes. One alone is true to us; One alone can be all things to us, One alone can supply our need.  
John Henry Newman 1801 - 1890

When Christ came into my life I came about like a well-handled ship.  
Robert Louis Stevenson 1850 - 1894

Thou art not here, and though we never saw Thee,  
Nor heard Thy words of power and grace to men,  
The Spirit here has taught us to adore Thee,  
And made us long for Thee to come again.

Robert A. Everett 1891 - 1966

### 'BONDMEN OF JESUS CHRIST'

Scriptures Read:

Philippians 2 v 5 - 11

1 Corinthians 6 v 19 - 20

Luke 19 v 12 - 21

Revelation 15 v 2 - 3

I would like to speak about bondmanship, because the scriptures teach that all believers are called to be bondmen. Romans 6 v 22 plainly says, 'having got your freedom from sin and having become bondmen to God', so that this truth applies to us all, both young and old.

The letter to the Philippians breathes the spirit of a bondman. The apostle refers to himself and to Timothy as "bondmen of Jesus Christ". It was not just a title he put on a letter. People who knew them would see that they were the Lord's bondmen, and even the enemy's agent, when they went into the city of Philippi, said, "these men are bondmen of the Most High God". And true bondmen they were; prepared to suffer,

being beaten and put in prison and yet, as faithful bondmen getting the victory!

I love to think of how they gained the victory. The jailor was woken out of sleep and was about to kill himself, but Paul and Silas, in the true spirit of their Master, cried out 'Do thyself no harm.' They had a wonderful Master, of Whom it was said that He was, "Holy, harmless and undefiled". He never did anybody any harm and Paul and Silas expressed the Spirit of Christ toward that man, who had earlier treated them so badly.

What tremendous sacrifice was made to bring the gospel to those people at Philippi, that they might be secured for Christ and set together in the assembly. On the one hand there was suffering, and, on the other, there was the joy of those who were happily committed to the service of their Master, cost what it might, and they were praising God with singing!

The part of Philippians we read is a marvellous passage, drawing our attention to how the Lord Jesus took the form of a bondman. It is very important to study the scripture in its setting (much trouble has been caused by taking it out of its setting!) and the context here reminds me of the word in Proverbs 25 v 11 as to a word fitly spoken, being like "apples of gold in pictures of silver". Apart from the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, there were no words more fitly spoken than these concerning the down-stooping of Jesus. The setting firstly is in relation to the fellowship of the saints, and the unity that he desired should be found among them - not a unity that disappears at the slightest stress but one where saints are "joined in soul"! Then the other side is that of the public testimony - they were to be as "lights in the world". Let us seek to be a more substantial witness to the true unity of believers - a unity which lies in the bonds of the Holy Spirit and in the love of Christ so that we may be a brighter testimony in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation.

As we consider these scriptures, I desire that the Holy Spirit will promote in us the lowly mind which was in Christ Jesus, and fill our hearts with joy as we think not only of where He has been, but of where He is now! He is the One to whom every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to God the Father's glory.

Paul begins by speaking of the 'form of God'. That is beyond us to explain. There are those who like to give a human and logical explanation to everything, but I am glad there is that which is beyond us - God is infinite and beyond us! Jesus took the form of a bondman; He didn't take the form of God. He was ever in the form of God. He was the I AM, the great eternal God. He ever existed! How great He is; and it is this sense of infinite greatness that moves our hearts to worship Him, as the hymn

puts it - 'Thee, the great I AM we worship, Mighty God, Eternal One'.

We are thankful for the liberty we have to address Him as our Saviour but we must always remember, with holy reverence, Who He is in His Person. He did not think it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God. There was no robbery in the claims that Jesus made. Here in lowly manhood He was no less than the eternal 'I AM', and when He said, 'I AM', His enemies fell away backward. (John 18 v 6) Yet such a Person took a bondman's form and made Himself of no reputation. Reputation often affects the way we think and the conclusions we come to, but Jesus made Himself of no reputation.

What a lowly stoop He made, expressed so well in the words of the hymn:  
'Sinner, see thy God beside thee,  
In a servant's form come near,  
Sitting, walking, talking with thee,  
Sinai's mount no longer fear.'

He did not come to be served but to serve, and nowhere is that seen so beautifully as in John's gospel, firstly at Sychar's well and then, in chapter 13, among His disciples. When it was a question of feet washing, Peter did not volunteer and John did not volunteer. Jesus rose from supper, laid aside His garments and took the wash hand basin, girded Himself with a linen towel and stooped to serve His own. I wonder if Peter thought 'I should have been doing this service, not the Lord'. He missed his opportunity (as we have so many times), perhaps because he felt he was a bit more important than the others. Service is not to give a status that sets us above others. Never! Jesus said, 'Who is greater, the one at table or he that serves?' He said, 'Those that are at table' but "I am in the midst of you as the one that serves". Oh, may we reflect the true spirit of service as learnt from Him who stooped so low to serve His own. He washed and dried their feet, leaving them refreshed and comfortable, happy and free in His presence!

So the apostle says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." A mind to go down and to go the whole way in obedience to God's will, even unto death. What that must have meant to Jesus - to be made sin, to be alone upon that cross, forsaken of His God! He went the whole way in love. He was the true Hebrew bondman saying distinctly, "I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go free." (Exodus 21 v 5) It was love that brought Jesus down from the glory, to Sychar's well and to wash the feet of His own; it was love that took Him to the cross, and into death itself. So we love this word "wherefore"; "Wherefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name, that, at the name of Jesus,

every knee should bow". Oh, may our hearts be bowed in worship as we just contemplate the holy movements of One so great who went down for us to the very lowest depths!

I read in Corinthians that "we are not our own, we have been bought with a price". I am thankful the Lord has saved my soul, but, more than that, He has bought me completely, spirit, soul and body, that I might be His. Very often in scripture, the word bondman conveys the thought of a slave. A master would go to the market place and buy a slave, pay the price and brand his own initials upon him as a proof of ownership. Think then of how the apostle Paul could speak about bearing in his body the brands of the Lord Jesus! It would have been clear to all that Paul was not his own - he belonged to Another, and this is a challenge to us today. Is it evident that we are not our own? Do our lives show that we have been bought with a price? Think of the price that Jesus paid to make us His own. Not corruptible things as silver or gold but with His own precious blood! What a price to pay for a sinner like me, but He paid it to have me wholly for Himself. It is not like working for an employer today, where we work set hours and the rest of our time is our own. The slave has no 'own time'. He is the possession of his master, and his time and energies are to do his master's will. Is this the kind of devotion found in our lives? 'Ye are not your own, ye have been bought with a price. Glorify now then God' he says, 'in your body'. A slave may not have had any possessions, but he had his body and he was to use it to serve and please his master.

Have we presented our bodies to God as a living sacrifice, for His will? The scriptures speak of different members of the body, like the ear. It was said prophetically of Jesus 'Thou wakenest mine ear morning by morning to hear as the instructed.' Have we got a bondman's ear? We may listen to many other things, but are we listening to what the Master would say? When we read the scriptures every morning, are we concerned to hear what the Lord would say to us? If we listen, He will speak to us and draw us to Himself. He said that 'If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me'. May our ears be ever listening for the Lord's voice!

The scriptures also speak of the mouth. It says in one place, "Jesus opening His mouth . . ." He taught always by example but also, of course, by His speaking and witness. He witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate and we are to use our mouths to confess the Saviour. That is what it says in Romans, "With the mouth, confession made to salvation". The confession is not about the company of Christians that we belong to, but who Jesus is, confessing Him as our Saviour and Lord. Can I ask those young in the faith whether they have begun to confess their faith in Jesus

to others and those of us who are older, when did they last confess our Lord and Saviour to other people. It is very practical, and it may be done with a stammering tongue, but it brings joy into your soul to say that you belong to Jesus.

Then we can think of the hands of Jesus. They were wonderful hands, hands that day by day were meeting human need. We read also in Proverbs of the hands of the woman of worth, that she stretches out her hand to the needy. Oh, may we be true bondmen and think more of the needs of others. Paul said his hands had ministered not only to his own needs but to the needs of others.

Think of the feet, "the beautiful feet of him that announces glad tidings, that publisheth peace." The quotation of that scripture in Romans addresses itself to us, "how beautiful the feet of them that announce the glad tidings of peace". Have you got a message of peace to carry with you? I would like to have that, and to preach it both by my life and by my witness. Do not just tell people what we do not do, because what we do, for Christ, is a far better testimony! Let them see that we love the Lord and care about our fellow men. David said, "Is there any left of the house of Saul that I may show him the kindness of God for Jonathan's sake". What a preaching that was!

Now in Luke Chapter 19 we have a reference to ten bondmen. In other parables some bondmen are given more than others but, in this passage, all are given the same. It is equal responsibility and it doesn't matter if we are old or young, each has a responsibility to the Lord. The man was going away and he tells them to use what he gave them and to trade while he was coming. It is not 'trade while I am away' but 'trade while I am coming', showing that the Lord's coming is always to be uppermost in our hearts.

Each believer has an impression of Christ, an understanding of the truth as it is in Him, and a personal sense of the grace of God. The Lord says 'Trade with that'. Use what you have. Reference was made earlier to visiting the sick and, if you go with an impression of Christ and share it with the one you are visiting, you will come away the richer. You gain far more than ever you give. You may meet another Christian and tell them of a scripture you have been thinking about and, as you converse together, you will get your thoughts enlarged and fresh impressions of Christ. There is a reference in Isaiah to 'Egypt becoming God's inheritance'. I didn't understand that scripture, so when I met a fellow believer I asked him and he referred me to the fact that Egypt was used to protect God's beloved Son, when Joseph and Mary took him away from Herod's murderous intentions. So we are enriched with new thoughts of the Lord Jesus and of God's precious word.

Then the Lord, on coming back, is going to ask us to give account, so we should each ask ourselves, 'What have I done with what has been given to me'? Think of the grace of God that has reached out to you and me; have we kept it to ourselves or have we told others about the Saviour's love? He is going to ask each one of us what we have been doing in the time of His absence. One of the bondmen says, 'I have kept it wrapped up in a towel'. We have been a bit like that; we kept the gospel to ourselves, but that's not what it is for! I understand that the word 'towel' could mean a 'sweat cloth'. We sometimes see a sportsman wearing a sweat band because of the energy he is expending, but how much energy do we put into serving the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, let us be more zealous in using what the Lord has given us. The truth is so wonderful. It is seen perfectly in Jesus. How can we explain the truth? Look at Jesus! It is all there in His blessed Person. He could say, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life".

Then there is a reward. There is responsibility, but also a reward! Wouldn't we like to have the Lord's 'Well done'? I knew a lady, a very dear believer; she was old and frail, but when they were moving her to a Nursing Home she said 'the Lord must have something more for me to do, but I know I'll get His Well Done'. She wasn't boastful, she said it sincerely, and I believe she would receive it too - but - I wonder, will we get the Lord's approval? The Lord Jesus is a wonderful Master. He is the Master who bought us. Let us resolve to use what He has given to us, for His own glory and praise, so that we may be found here as faithful bondmen, worthy to receive His 'well done'.

Now the passage in Revelation shows us that bondmanship is not all labour and toil. There is a joy in serving the Master. These saints, in a latter day, have come through a pretty difficult time, the time of the beast, its image and the number of its name; but they have come through and, what is more, they have gained 'the victory'. Oh, I would like to encourage us all that we also, in our day and in our circumstances, might be 'gaining the victory'.

What a challenge this scripture is, to keep ourselves pure and free of defilement so that we too can stand on the glass sea. Is everything about our lives transparent? Is everything right and clear before the Lord? Paul said that he didn't mind men examining him. He said, "He that examines me is the Lord." We have to stand His holy scrutiny. Let our lives then be fully open and transparent; as one of our hymns says, 'Let all be clear' and, when that is so, then we can sing, "the song of Moses bondman of God". What a song of victory that was, sung on the banks of the Red Sea

- a song of deliverance! God taking his people out of Egypt into the wilderness. Was that the end? No. It says that He would bring them in and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance! It's worth singing about.

We sometimes come up against impossible situations, just like the Israelites, when we can't see any way out. The Egyptians were behind and the Red Sea in front. What can we do? "Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah". Wonderful salvation! God made a way through and delivered His people. It speaks of Christ's death, His death for us. It is very personal. It's not like the Jordan where the waters were far back. At the Red Sea the waters were a wall to them on right hand and on the left. It was near to each one of them, so we each should have personal experience of the delivering power of the Lord's death in setting us free from the bondage of this world, to serve God as His sons.

Then there is another song - the song of the Lamb. Thousands upon thousands of God's people are going to sing the song of the Lamb. This takes our thoughts to the slaying of the passover lamb, and to Isaiah's prophecy, that He was "led as a lamb to slaughter", and to John the Baptist, who presents the greatness of the Lamb in His suffering character - "Behold the Lamb of God", the taker away of the sin of the world. How great the Lamb of God is, Who by His sufferings and death upon the cross has laid a basis whereby God will remove all defilement and sin from His universe for ever. Then we can look on to the Heavenly City. There is no need of the sun, for the lamp thereof is the Lamb. He is the Light of the Heavenly City!

Oh, let us all join in this song of 'glory to the Lamb' and may we be faithful bondmen, the happy slaves of Christ. Let us be more devoted to Him and using what He has given us, so that we may be able to give a good account when He comes, and that we may receive His 'Well Done!'

May He bless us all for His Name's sake.



## END PIECE

### Ways in which Christ is presented in the Epistles (Extracted from the teaching of F.E. Raven.)

Epistle	Presentation of Christ
Romans	The mercy seat
1 Corinthians	The wisdom and the power of God
2 Corinthians	The Yea and the Amen
Galatians	The vessel of blessing to the gentiles
Ephesians	Ascended up above all heavens
Philippians	The life and aim of the christian
Colossians	The Head
1 Thessalonians	The Deliverer from the coming wrath
2 Thessalonians	The-Destroyer of antichrist
Hebrews	The Apostle and High Priest
James	The Lord of glory
1 Peter	The Living Stone
2 Peter	The Day-Star
1 John	The true God and Eternal Life