

No. 5

Living Water—Issue No 5

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THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

“... for Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,”
(1 Peter 3:18).

I want to speak about these words. I wonder what they mean to each one of us here tonight. Are they just words written in the scripture? Or has the truth of this sentence worked in your heart and changed you? It has changed me. The wonderful Person that this scripture speaks of has come into my life and changed it. But what about you, my friend, can you say that too? I am sure many if not all in this room can say that for themselves, that Christ has changed their lives. Tonight I would just like to draw attention to one or two things from this scripture.

Firstly it shows that Christ has desired to bring us to God. Distance had come in between God and man. “By the disobedience of the one man the many have been constituted sinners,” (Romans 5:19). Distance came in because man had sinned. Yet Jesus came to take away that distance. That is the wonderful news in the glad tidings tonight. I can speak of a wonderful Saviour who came in to remove that distance, the One who, “has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”. The only way that the distance could be taken away was from God’s side. There is nothing that we could do to take away that distance. Sin had come in and what could we do? We are helpless.

We can see from the early part of the Bible how evil increased until God came in in judgment in the flood. God looked down on the earth and there was nothing in what people did that gave Him pleasure except for Noah. How Noah preached! Yet how few were saved. Only eight came through the flood. There are more than eight in this room tonight and I trust that all here are saved. But if you are not, my friend, do not spurn the opportunity. Jesus has come in to save you from your sins. As I said, God moved from His side. He sent His Son. Scripture tells us that Jesus “humbled himself” (Philippians 2:8). Jesus was on equality with God, and yet He humbled Himself taking the form of a bondman. Think of that, how Jesus came in. It was a suffering pathway.

I have been impressed today by that hymn ‘Man of Sorrows! what a name’. What does that mean to you? Have you thought about those words? “Man of Sorrows”. The scripture tells us that Jesus was a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” (Isaiah 53:3). That was my Saviour; that was His path-

way. There was joy, too; He delighted in fulfilling the will of His God and Father. Yet the scripture tells us that He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. How acquainted with grief Jesus was, because He came right down to us in our need. He drew near to men, women and children. As the Scripture says, "... the people sitting in darkness has seen a great light, and to those sitting in the country and shadow of death, to them has light sprung up." (Matthew 4:16). That great light was Jesus. That light has never faded and it is shining tonight, shining in the glad tidings for you. I desire to point you to Jesus, to point you to a great light shining tonight, shining that all men might see it, shining that many might be attracted to God. Jesus could say, "and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me." (John 12:32). He drew persons to Himself when He was here. The Bible is full of accounts telling of the crowds that pressed on Jesus. I desire to have a greater impression myself of the wonderful way that Jesus drew near to us. He was acquainted with the ills of all that were around Him. He drew near to the tax-gatherers and the sinners. He drew near to those that needed Him. He could say, "I have not come to call righteous men, but sinners." (Mark 2:17). He had come, "to seek and to save that which is lost." (Luke 19:10). That is my Saviour, what a wonderful Saviour He is! He did not distance Himself from us in our need; He drew near, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; how close Jesus came. He could sympathise with men, sympathise with their condition. His was a suffering pathway, a pathway that led to the cross. What suffering was there!

Isaiah 53 is a very familiar scripture, but it is worth reading again: "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath subjected him to suffering. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (Isaiah 53:10). When Jesus was on the cross God poured out His judgment upon Jesus and Jesus bore that judgment to set us free. There is no hope for any of us apart from what Jesus has done. Have you Jesus in your life? Is He the One that you are looking to? Is He the One that you love? The One that is the centre of your affections? Jesus would attract you to Himself. What a wonderful Saviour He is! He suffered at the hands of God to give us hope, to take away our sins.

Christ "has *once* suffered for sins". The sacrifice is complete. The epistle to the Hebrews tells us that He offered one sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:12). Yes, there is no need for Jesus to suffer again. There is nothing I can give for my sins. There is nothing you can give for your sins. "Jesus ... said, It is finished; and having bowed his head, he delivered up his spirit." (John 19:30).

“Has once suffered for sins”. How much those words mean. During the three hours of darkness He suffered for sins. We will never measure those hours. Yet it means so much to the forgiven sinner to know that Jesus has taken his place. Then He was taken down from the cross and put in the grave. Peter, the one who wrote the epistle we read from at the beginning, was one of those who saw Jesus living again. Jesus was in the grave for three days and three nights but then He was raised. The Man who has gone into death has broken the power of death. Jesus lives! Peter was one of the witnesses, one of those who saw Jesus living. What hope and certainty it gave Peter. Peter could speak of the precious blood of Jesus that was shed on the cross, shed that we might be cleansed from our sins. Peter too could speak of a wonderful living Saviour. What hope Peter had and he loved to tell others of Jesus. When he preached on the day of Pentecost about three thousand were converted at one time. Peter knew what he was talking about. What a difference that made. What a convicting effect it had on those who heard. It says, “they were pricked in heart,” and they said, “what shall we do”? (Acts 2:37). Oh, that there might be conviction tonight, conviction in many hearts as it comes home to us afresh that we are sinners in need of a Saviour.

Jesus suffered, “the just for the unjust”. The word ‘just’ in the Greek original is singular, and ‘unjust’ is plural. No-one can call themselves just. Scripture makes that quite plain. Only One has been just: Jesus. He was the only One who could meet God’s holy claims. None of us could do so. We are sinners away from God. Do not try to take yourself out of that place, my friend. Jesus told the story of two men, two men that went up to pray. One of them said, “God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, rapacious, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax-gatherer.” (Luke 18:11). How easy it is to say that I am not as other men. I find it in my own heart; I do not do the dreadful things that other men do. Yet am I any better? No, I am a sinner! Whether it is one sin or a thousand sins, it makes no difference. I am a sinner. My friend, do not take yourself out of the place of being one of the unjust. What did the other man say? “O God, have compassion on me, the sinner.” What does the Lord say of him? “This man went down to his house justified rather than that other.” That is the message in the glad tidings. If you are prepared to admit that you are wrong: if you are prepared to ask God for mercy: that is the way of blessing. There is nothing for us to do. Jesus has done it all. What could we do anyway? What can we do to make ourselves better in the sight of God? “... all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). No, there is nothing we can do to help ourselves. But why try, my friend? I have tried and it has been a waste of time.

Every time you try to change you find it is no good trying to improve the first man. Jesus died to take that man out of sight: through the living Saviour there is a new man. Jesus takes away our sins and brings in something that can be pleasurable to God. How wonderful that is.

He suffered, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”. What a wonderful thing it is that we can be brought to God. Is there something that is stopping you surrendering your heart to Jesus? I wish I could say more of His love. The love of Jesus. It was love that kept Him on that suffering pathway. It was love that took Him to the cross. It was love that kept Him on the cross. What wonderful love Jesus has shown. In His pathway here He was showing out the heart of God. Think of that; Jesus came here to make known the heart of God. We were reading this afternoon that “God is a spirit” (John 4:24). How can man know God? You cannot know God unless you come to Him through Jesus. And there are other blessings too in coming to Jesus; you know that your sins are forgiven, you know the joy and peace of believing, you receive the Holy Spirit, and the gift of sonship.

It is a wonderful thing to receive the Holy Spirit. He is here to help us through our pathways. Perhaps you gave your heart to Jesus ten years ago, but what about now? How real in your heart now is the forgiveness of sins? Is it something you are enjoying or is it something that has lapsed? Perhaps you feel that a distance has again come in between you and God? There is no need for that. If you are livingly and vitally in the joy of what Jesus has done there will be no distance, no feeling of uncertainty. Scripture speaks of repenting sinners; yes, we need to repent, a continuing matter. What about our link *now*? It is *now* that God would desire that as forgiven sinners we should enjoy what He has for us. These things are to be enjoyed; they are not just in the scriptures; they are here to be enjoyed. In the christian pathway the Holy Spirit helps us. The Lord Jesus would give us salvation. The name of the Lord Jesus brings us salvation. How the name of Jesus can help us in our pathways here. I wish I knew for myself more dependence on it. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The name of Jesus can save us from so much. Salvation is not just for eternity, it is for now. The things we read of in the scriptures are not just for when we die, they are for now. None of us knows when we are going to die, no, but while we are here we can enjoy these things.

So where is our faith? Is our faith in Jesus? Is it in the Man who is living the other side of death, a Man who has broken the power of death? Or are we still living in the things of this earth? My Bible tells me that, “the earth shall grow

old like a garment” (Isaiah 51:6), “and the earth and the works in it shall be burnt up” (2 Peter 3:10). The Bible speaks prophetically of many things and many have already come to pass. Is your faith in the things that are passing? Perhaps you have got your faith in yourself. How often we do! Do not trust in yourself. You will fail as easily as other people do. What a wonderful thing it is to have your faith in Jesus, One who never fails. The four gospels record how all kinds of persons came to Jesus and He was able to meet every problem. I cannot understand every problem you might have. Your parents might not be able to understand the problems that you have. But Jesus will understand. It is a wonderful thing to be able to turn to Jesus and to tell Him about things that you cannot tell anyone else. What a wonderful Friend we have in Jesus. A “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24). If you are at your wit’s end, if you have no-one else to turn to, you can turn to Jesus. He is with us every step of our way once you have simply turned to Him. That man said, “O God, have compassion on me, the sinner.” Another man called out, “what must I do that I may be saved?” The reply was, “Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:30,31). That is all you have to do, my friend. Cry to the Lord to save you and He will. We sang at the beginning, ‘God waits in grace with hands outstretched to bless’. From God’s side there is nothing hindering. Is there something hindering from your side? Do not put off coming to Christ. Come into wonderful blessings; come in and find One who can meet the needs of your soul.

“... for Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”. God is seeking worshippers (John 4:23). There is to be an answer to God from those who trust in Jesus. Why will you not add your voice to that response? There are many praising Him. There have been many praising Him for a long time: why not add your voice to that great throng, return some praise to God; He has done so much for you. He has not spared His Son. Yes, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal.” (John 3:16). By putting your faith and trust in Jesus there is salvation for your pathway here and the future is assured. This world is going on to judgment but a new heaven and a new earth is being brought into view. Heaven is where the believer is going. Is heaven your home? Can you be sure in your heart that you are heading for heaven? There are two ways through this world—a broad way and a narrow way. “Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter in through it. For narrow the gate and straitened the way that leads to life, and they are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13,14). May you be heading on that way to life. If not, you can

change direction now by turning to Jesus and asking Him to save you, asking Him to come into your life and He will bless you, and you will know what it is to have your sins forgiven. May it be so for His name's sake.

Peter Wallach

“JESUS . . . THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE”

“Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes on me, though he have died, shall live; and every one who lives and believes on me shall never die. Believest thou this? She says to him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world.” (John 11:25–27).

I want to pass on an impression, dear friends, of the glory of the Saviour that we love, as the “resurrection and the life”. Our brother has suggested, in prayer, that we might receive a word from our glorious Saviour, and this is the word of comfort that He would give, particularly to those that mourn, but to encourage us all to be steadfast in the pathway of the will of God.

I do not go into the circumstance in which this tremendous statement was made, “I am the resurrection and the life”. We can bring into this very occasion a Saviour who has suffered and has died, been into the very domain of death and smashed its power. The might of that victory was anticipated when the I AM said, “resurrection and life”. The glory of this stupendous fact that He who as to His Person was and ever will be over all, God blessed for ever, could speak thus to Martha and say to her, “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes on me, though he have died, shall live”. This raises the question then, dear friends, as to whether we all believe on Jesus, this Saviour who is crowned in highest glory, a living, personal, blessed Saviour. “He that believes on me, though he have died, shall live”. Our brother has quoted already, in thanksgiving, the word that says, “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8) “....though he have died, shall live”.

But what about the interim? There is no interim. When our beloved sister breathed her last, her spirit was immediately raptured into the presence of her Lord. It is a very great comfort to think of that. No interim: she is now in the

blessed sunshine of the presence of the Saviour that she loved. Soon her body is to be lowered into the grave, the temporary resting place hers in the light of the day of coming glory when “all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice” (John 5:28).

So it says, “every one who lives and believes on me shall never die”. You may say that this is rather a strange statement to make when we are in the presence of death! What does it mean? It means that the penalty of death for the christian has gone for ever. The sting of death has been removed and in this very occasion, through divine grace, we are able to sing, for we are given the victory over death and over the grave now. One could say, “but thanks to God, who gives us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

May I enquire, with deep respect, as to whether we all are living in the light of this final victory; whether we all are believing in the One who is the resurrection and the life? “And salvation is in none other, for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12). If there might be—and I have no idea whether there is or is not—someone here who has not yet this personal living vital link with Him who is the resurrection and the life, I beg of you, in the very presence of death itself, to yield your heart to Christ. No-one has loved you as He has loved you and He loves you still. No-one else has gone into death, no-one has poured out his own life’s blood in order that you might be secured, with us all, for time and for eternity.

The blessed One who would come into this meeting now as we sympathise with those who are mourning and put our arms around them that they may be greatly comforted: He is none other than the resurrection and the life, the One who has been into death and has come out of it triumphantly, the One who now is the life of the believer—“for me to live”, says one, “is Christ”. May it be so, for His name’s sake.

Ron Gregory

“For if we are become identified with [him] in the likeness of his death, so also we shall be of [his] resurrection;” (Romans 6:5)

“I AM COMING AGAIN AND SHALL RECEIVE YOU TO MYSELF”

“I am coming again and shall receive you to myself”

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”

(John 14:3, 6)

We sang in our hymn:–

‘O Jesus, precious Saviour,
O when wilt Thou return?’

The Lord’s word is “I am coming again”. He is going to return. He has taken our sister to be with Himself, but He would leave those of us who remain with a word too, “I am coming again”. He is going to receive every one of us who have trusted Him as our Saviour—we who know in our hearts that He is now at the Father’s right hand. Jesus has been through death and has broken its power. As having overcome death He is going to return with an assembling shout. We have alluded to it already. The dead in Christ shall rise first, then the living who remain will be caught up to be with Him forever. The point is not so much *where* we shall be, but that we shall be for ever *with* Christ, the One who has bought us.

Then we might say, as Thomas does here, ‘How do we know?’ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”. We know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour so we know “the way”. We also know “the truth”. More than that, we know “the life”; we know eternal life.

Our sister is now with Christ. Her spirit is in paradise. Soon we shall be with Christ as well. Maybe if we are left here for a few more days we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper. That is a very great thing for then He comes to us. Greater still will be the time when we go to be with Him, when He receives us to Himself.

May we all be trusting in Christ and so be part of that company who will be caught up to be with Him forever.

Harry Knappett

And no one has gone up into heaven, save he who came down out of heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. (John 3:13)

THINGS WE OUGHT TO DO 2.

“... for for the name have they gone forth, taking nothing of those of the nations. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.”
(3 John 7,8)

John commences his third epistle with the words “The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.” (3 John:1). What a fatherly impartation, as a father and an elder, John is writing a short letter. Do we write our letters like this? How official we can sound. Think of an elder with an interest in this beloved Gaius and he is writing to him, “Beloved, I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers.” He is concerned about his prosperity and he goes on and says, “Beloved, thou doest faithfully in whatever thou mayest have wrought towards the brethren.” What a service beloved Gaius had rendered to the saints. I wonder how we can serve, how we can express love to one another. Well, here is a man who was doing it. He is setting forward those who are on a journey; he is fully behind them because they have gone forth for the Name, for the Name of Jesus, the One who is on high and whose Name is still here and they are seeking to serve Him. This brother is so much with them in it that he is setting them forward on their journey. Can we set one another forward on their journey if they are going for the Name of Jesus? Oh, let us be more expressive of our christianity; let us be more expressive of the love that exists amongst us.

“For the name have they gone forth, taking nothing of those of the nations. We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.” What about our reception? How receptive are we? Think of the Lord Jesus taking children into His arms and blessing them; think of Him receiving all who came to Him. Oh the receptiveness of Christ! How receptive are we?

Here is a brother setting forward others on their journey and John says, “We therefore ought to receive such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.” We hear quite a lot of standing for the truth and such like things; well, let it be in expression and let us be receptive; let us receive such so that we are fellow-workers. Let us be on this line so that we are receiving and setting forward on their journey those who are for the Name. There is plenty to be done and plenty of different ways of serving and it is our responsibility to do it and do it as representing Christ so that there is testimony in it.

James Strachan.

In the next issue, DV: How we ought to conduct ourselves in God's house.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

You get understanding by the Spirit, because the Spirit brings the mind of Christ. (8/130). London, 1894

The anointing is to characterise us, and by it we know all things. There ought to be about us a savour of divine truth and grace, that we might not only do the right thing, but do the right thing in the right way: what Romans 12 puts before us; not only to show mercy, but to show it with cheerfulness, doing all with divine unction. (8/167) 1894

Forgiveness of sins is more than a term. Surely we have something that would answer to the scapegoat (Leviticus 16:21,22). God in that way gave something special and substantial as proof to Israel that their sins were gone. So with us we receive the Spirit that we may know that we have forgiveness. (4/94)

The flesh and the Spirit are mutually exclusive. The glory of each respectively is, adultery, and love. (19/416)

As sure as you are in the power of the Spirit of God, you will know that you are weak, "when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Where the Spirit of God is, there is bound to be a sense of weakness. (2/277) 1896

We look for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as Saviour; hence it is right that the heart of the christian should be set upon heaven. But remember, on the other hand, that the Spirit of God is here upon earth to make available to men all the goodness that is in heaven. (15/239) Glasgow, 1901

Depend upon it, no greater evil has been done, no greater insult offered to the Lord than in ignoring the presence of the Spirit sent by Him from the Father. (8/105) London, 1894

Think what a wonderful thing it is for man to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost! It has become so doctrinal with us, we have got so accustomed to the sound, that we have lost the sense of the greatness of it. (1/17) 1895

We are kept by the influence of Christ ... We are not kept by seeking to be proper in our conduct, or by precepts; we are kept in our path by the influence of Christ. What keeps you under the influence of Christ? The Spirit which is given to you. (16/201) Manchester, 1902

You are to be strengthened by might by His Spirit in the inner man, but are you prepared to sacrifice the outward man? The two cannot go on together. The inner man is in contrast to the outward man, it is true of every christian. The outward man is the man who is in touch with all that is present; and the inner man is the man who is in touch with God, and all that is of God. (15/82) Peckham, 1901

It is an interesting point in connection with the church at the beginning that there was nothing outside of the Spirit. If a man had to do the least kind of service, to distribute money, he had to be full of the Holy Spirit. (17/117) Chicago, 1902

I beg of you to remember that you are not taught of man, you are taught of God. The anointing teaches you, "they shall be all taught of God" (John 6:45). You have the great Teacher within you, the anointing. You may get a great deal of ministry, but you need to apprehend that every lesson you really learn is taught you by the Holy Spirit. (13/143-4)

Let the forces of evil at work down here be as powerful and subtle as they may: the Holy Spirit is greater, and the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the power of the Holy Spirit. (3/164) Manchester

I will tell you the first thing which the Holy Ghost does in the heart of the believer. He sheds abroad the love of God; He brings home to the believer the truth that the gift of God's blessed Son is the proof of divine love; and when that is brought home we get the consciousness by the Holy Ghost that God is love, and our part is to live in the presence of that love, to live there as Christ does. (1/317)

The Acts of the apostles presents the work externally, that is, the outward effects of the testimony—the work of the Spirit lay in what was underneath in souls. God's work in souls is not done by instruments; it is His own. (15/386)

I have no doubt that if you get into the region of the Spirit you become sensitive to error. You do not judge things by creeds. They are deceptive. ... The only preservative from error is the region of the Spirit. There you become sensitive to error. I do not believe much more in orthodoxy than in heterodoxy. Go through the history of christianity; it is difficult to distinguish between the two. (17/307) Indianapolis, 1902

Extracts from the teaching of Frederick E Raven

Numbers in brackets relate to the volume and page numbers of the 'Ministry of F.E. Raven— New Series' published by the Kingston Bible Trust.

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labours increase,
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

When *we* have exhausted our store of endurance,
When *our* strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When *we* reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

Annie Johnson Flint 1857–1932

“VIA CRUCIS”

I drew a cherished plan,
A fair and choice design,
To beautify the earthly span,
Of this brief life of mine.

God shaped a cross of pain—
A galling, crushing weight—
In ruins, wrecked beneath the strain,
My plan lay desolate.

Upwards I looked at length:
‘Thy will, not mine,’ my prayer:
‘Oh Lord,’ I murmured, ‘Give the strength,
My daily cross to bear;

‘Nor let me lay it down;
Thy work in me complete:
Then for the cross give me the crown,
To cast before Thy feet’.

S J B Carter 1858–1938

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

I would like to share my story with others, and point out that I am definitely not a good person, but I am a changed one, and it is because I now have a Friend who takes care of me; His name is the Lord Jesus.

I was born and brought up in a slum area of North London; my parents were Irish Catholics and we had to obey the Roman church in most things, that is not eating meat on Fridays and attending Mass every Sunday. Apart from that anything goes. I never really got to hear about my Saviour and His unconditional love for me.

My mother died when I was eight years old and my father did his best to look after me and keep his job at the same time. It was hard for him and I would not go to school. I spent most of my youth causing trouble and began to drink a lot, which later led me into borstals and prisons for violence.

I was angry and had no hope in my life. I found myself without education, covered in tattoos and penniless. It was easy to turn to more crime, it seemed the only answer. I now had a girlfriend that I later married and gave her a horrible life. I really loved her but I never knew how to show it.

A friend of mine gave me a job looking after his gaming machine business, while he skipped the country for tax reasons. I ended up owning the business because he was out of the way. My life improved, we bought a nice place to live in, I had cars, plenty of money and I started to get involved in drugs; they gave me the escape that I needed at the time.

My wife left me because I was never about, to talk to or help her. I was shocked because I thought that everything seemed to be going so well. We got back together a few months later and I promised to change but I got worse. My father had an accident after I persuaded him to come out with me on one of my drinking sprees and he died three days later in hospital. I was with him and my heart was really broken. My sister had become a christian five years earlier and tried to tell me about God. I used to swear at this God and her. It did not make sense to me at all.

Things went well for a while and we got a new home but after a couple of years our marriage started to fall apart again. One day I went home to find the flat half empty; Kim had gone and said that there was no way she would ever

return. I got so depressed that I visited a doctor and was given antidepressants. One day under their influence I walked into a tree and nearly lost my eye on a branch, so they went in the bin. I tried everything and ended up at the Westminster Chapel. I heard the gospel for the first time in my life and went again the next week.

Someone said, 'People can change, a bad man can become good, and a good man can also become bad'. Jesus said, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mark 2:17).

My sister had taken a lot of time trying to help me and now her prayers were being answered. I lost my business and then my flat; everything that I valued was gone now but the great change was that I had asked God to forgive me and had accepted Jesus as my Saviour. I asked Him to give me my wife back and against all the odds within three months we were together again. This was a thing only God could have done and I thank Him so much.

I was baptised and found a christian fellowship in Maidenhead which I left although they were very good to me and helped me as a new christian. Then I was without a church for a few months but now I am at a Gospel Hall in Slough and have been there for over eighteen months. I fit in and they encourage me. I have not found it easy sometimes and have been a problem to some people, which I regret. I make a lot of mistakes; at the end of the day I am still me and I need a lot of grace to get through. I have seen prayers answered and things happen that only God and I know about. My wife and I are getting on well; I think she can trust me for once.

I am going to be alright because God is looking after me. If you do not know Him now then please think on what He said, "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)

Sean Staunton 1994

**Draw me out of the net that they have hidden for me; for thou art my strength.
Into thy hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me,
Jehovah, [thou] God of truth. (Psalm 31:4,5)**

THE WAY OF RECOVERY

I recollect hearing of an incident which occurred during the first World War. Man was doing his worst, but God is always doing His best. In the gift of His Son He did His best. He spared not His own Son. And so during that awful period the work of God went on, and there were thousands of conversions, and the work goes on still.

A bishop was the instrument whom God used for the conversion of a young woman in London. She was converted to God but not secure in the way which God would have. She entered into the Red Cross service and then got away from the Lord. . . .

She came back to London and the bishop was preaching again, and when he finished preaching he walked down the aisle and the young woman stepped out and spoke to him, and said, ' You will be sorry to hear that I have discovered that I can get along without Christ.' Satan had got the better of her, it was all out, she was deceived, like many others in the thought that she could get along without Christ. . . .

Well, the bishop said, 'I do regret it very much, but I can tell you that He cannot get along without *you*,' and this so touched the wanderer that she broke down and was restored on the spot. The bishop told this story in Paris where he was also preaching and a person who was in the audience told me. The Lord has need of each of His elect; He died in order to have you, and He will have you. He may have to overthrow kingdoms to get you, but He will get you, and He wants you wholly; He wants the entire person.

James Taylor

What think ye? If a certain man should have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not, leaving the ninety and nine on the mountains, go and seek the one that has gone astray?
(Matthew 18:12)

MANHOOD ACCORDING TO GOD

1 Timothy 2: 5-7

Numbers 12: 1-8

Esther 9: 3-4

I desire to speak about the Man Christ Jesus, the man Moses and the man Mordecai. It is remarkable how the Spirit of God speaks about these men, each of them as ‘the man’. Of course, in the case of the Lord Jesus it is unique. Moses and Mordecai, great men though they were, were but men; men in whom God had wrought, and in whom wonderful results for God appeared. But the Lord Jesus is infinitely more than man, though we thank God that He is truly Man, and retains manhood eternally. So we must always think of Christ as distinct and unique, and that needs to be preserved in our minds.

It says here that “God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all”. That marks out His distinctness in an outstanding way; there is not only the distinctness of His Person, but the distinctness of what He has done. He has done what no one else could have done; He “gave himself a ransom for all”. That helps us to hold the personal distinction and moral excellence of Christ in a special way in our minds.

So we have first of all the Man Christ Jesus; He is the “mediator of God and men”. A mediator is one who can, as Scripture says, lay his hand upon both. (Job 9:33) He can represent God, and he can represent man, and he can in that sense so to speak, bring the two together, that is the great value of a mediator. We do not have to do with God direct. “No one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18). He dwells in unapproachable light whom no man has seen nor is able to see, and therefore, when we have to do with God, there is the need of a mediator. And so we have a mediator in the Person of Christ and He becomes commended to us by the fact that He “gave himself a ransom for all”. Not simply that He was willing to give Himself, that is wonderful, but that He was competent to do it. There is no one else in the universe competent to do it, and hence we always need to keep in our minds the personal uniqueness of Christ.

God’s pleasure from the beginning has been in men; that is the matter of His sovereignty. I do not think we could say why, save that it is according to the good pleasure of His will. Wisdom’s delights “were with the sons of men”

(Proverbs 8:31). God has nothing less in mind for men than that they should be sons. We do not know anything about the creation of angels but a time came when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26); showing clearly that He had the thought of men before Him. Angels had been created long before, but when man was created they were there, as subsidiary, you might say, to man. And they serve to bring out the greatness of Christ; because when God brings in the first-born into the habitable world He says, "And let all God's angels worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)—*all* of them. I suppose that refers to the coming day, when He brings Him into the world, in the world to come. It has been connected with the birth of Christ, and the celebration of it by a multitude of the heavenly host, but I think the real allusion is to His bringing Him in, in the day of His glory, in the world to come, according to Psalm 97, and in that day all God's angels are to worship Him.

So we have the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all; what a wonderful thing that is. You can see that on the one hand God has been pleased to approach us in a Man, and He has in mind that man should approach Him, and both the approach and the answer to it are before us in Christ. When the Lord first appeared in human condition, it was not as a full grown man, it was as a babe. Wonderful thing when you think of it; who would be afraid of a babe? God dispels all fear at the outset. Of course He had to grow up to full manhood before there could be the full expression in a Man, of what God's thoughts are towards men, but still that is how God proceeded; He approached us in a babe, one lying in a manger too; wonderful thing. If He had lain in a palace you might have said we cannot approach, so God said, He shall be laid in a manger. No one could be afraid to approach a manger. Well now that is some indication to us of what God is like, how He would approach us in a way intended to dispel all fear. Yet on the other hand we are never to forget that He is God and that holiness becomes His house for ever. It says, "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever" (Psalm 93:5). Whatever form the house of God took at any time, whether it was the tabernacle, or the temple, or whether, as now, it is the church, whatever form it took, "holiness becometh thy house, O Jehovah, for ever." So holiness befits us in our relations with God. Peter discerned that Jesus was the "holy one of God." You will remember how the Lord said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast words of life eternal; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy one of God." (John 6:68-69) That is what Peter discerned in Jesus as he took account of Him in His relations with God; as he took account of Him in His relations too with themselves they got the sense that He was "the holy one of God". Now that is a

wonderful thing, because that means that He is the One in whom all that God looks for in man is perfectly found. There is nothing at all incongruous, nothing out of keeping with what God is in His nature, and in His desires, nothing out of keeping with that in Jesus. And so the Lord presents Himself in that light to Philadelphia; He presents Himself as “the holy, the true” (Revelation 3:7). I might say that what we have said as to the holy One of God comes in the sixth chapter of John’s gospel. In the seventh chapter of John’s gospel we get “the true”. The Lord says, “He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but he that seeks the glory of him that has sent him, he is true, and unrighteousness is not in him.” (John 7:18). And so you have the ‘Holy’ in chapter six and the ‘True’ in chapter seven. The ‘Holy’ is what He is in His manhood Godward, the ‘True’ is what He is in His manhood in testimony manward, and in both you have perfection. The Lord presents Himself to Philadelphia as ‘the Holy, the True’, showing that the intention is not that we should be affected, so much, by the official positions and titles of Christ, but rather by what He is morally, so that we might learn God. God is said to be “the Father of compassions, and God of all encouragement” (2 Corinthians 1:3). That is how Paul presents God to us in the second epistle to the Corinthians. How often in the gospels we read that the Lord had compassion; think of God coming out in that way, evincing His compassions as Christ moved amongst men in His creation.

So as I say God has approached us in a Man. You have the two sides in Jesus, first of all the One in whom God has approached us, and then on the other hand the answer to that, you might say, in a Man; that is the Lord sets out in Himself, as Man perfectly, all that God looks for in man. You can understand therefore at His baptism how the heavens opened to Him and there was a voice from heaven saying, “*Thou* art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight.” (Luke 3:22) That was just when He accepted baptism before entering on His service. Then at the end of His service practically, when “*he* stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” (Luke 9:51) again we get the voice from heaven, on the mount of transfiguration, expressing the Father’s delight in Jesus. Between the time of the baptism of Jesus and the time of the transfiguration, there had been the three and a half years, in which the Lord was here in public testimony, and again, at the end of that time, you get a voice out of the cloud saying, “*This* is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight” (Matthew 17:5). On the one hand God has approached us perfectly in Man, in Christ; on the other hand, in Christ, He sets out perfectly all that He looks for in man, all that answers to His heart. We can rest in this with deep satisfaction in the sense that in Christ, God has before Him now, in His immediate presence, a Man who in every way has answered, and does answer, to all that He desires in men. If

then we have that apprehension of Christ surely it will have the effect of promoting a desire in us to learn from Him and take character from Him too. To learn from Him, as the Lord says in the gospel of Matthew, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

Is any one of us meek naturally, is any one of us lowly naturally? I do not think so. If we take on any features of meekness at all, if we take on any features of lowliness at all, lowliness of mind, we can only do so as learning from Christ. So the Lord says, "Take my yoke upon you". That is to be a definite thing with us. Are any of the dear brethren restless, not knowing what rest of soul is, not knowing what contentment with present circumstances is? If so the Lord says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls". Paul says that he had learned, it had not come to him naturally, "I have learnt in those circumstances in which I am, to be satisfied in myself." (Philippians 4:11); not exactly to be content with the circumstances, that is not the point, but in whatever circumstances he was, he had learnt to be content in himself. Now what is the secret of that? I believe the secret of that is what the Lord speaks of in John 4, "the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life" (John 4:14). Paul says he had learnt to be content in himself; it was what he had in himself that provided him with contentment; it was what the Spirit was to him as springing up in him unto eternal life, holding him in his thoughts and affections in relation to Christ, and in relation to the saints and that as a present reality.

There is immense gain for us in the fact that Christ has become Man, and that you have perfection there. He has all the sympathies and affections of a man. He is there before us now as pattern; we have not to strive after something; He is simply there as pattern, and the Lord says, "learn from me". The more we do so the more we shall come up to what God intends which is to secure His pleasure in men. The church, the body of Christ, is to be the full expression of it. The church is a wonderful thing and it is nearly complete now, it has been in the process of formation for nearly two thousand years. How many believers compose it? I suppose no one but God knows, but a wonderful thing the body of Christ will be. A vessel composed of creatures, those who are only creatures, a creature vessel, but able to express Christ, without anything being lacking, that is what the body of Christ will be, a marvel of divine workmanship. We can understand, if God has wrought for nearly two thousand years, the Spirit having been active all that time, what a vessel is going to be the

result of it. We shall see it soon; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we shall see it. Even the Lord has not seen it yet (I speak reverently), but in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it will come into view, the church, the body of Christ. And then, in due course, it will come down out of heaven from God having the glory of God. What great things we are connected with! How important this time of formation is. We should see that we do not waste time, do not allow things to distract us from the things of the Lord.

The Man “Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all”, is the subject of testimony. “He ... has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things”. It is the descending One who has gone up above all the heavens, it says, “But that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same who has also ascended up above all the heavens, that he might fill all things” (Ephesians 4:9–10). It is the descending One who has gone up above all heavens. If there is any desire with us to exalt ourselves, any tendency in that direction in our thoughts, let us always remember that it is the descending One who has gone up above all heavens, that He might fill all things. He is going to fill all things with the descending spirit. So that when the saints come down out of heaven they descend; they are not said to be sent, they descend; it is a wonderful movement, so to speak, that they have learned and taken on from Christ; they come down in the spirit and power of His movements.

Well, one need not say more about the Man Christ Jesus, although I am conscious that I have said very little really. But that is the great standard of ‘Manhood’; the ‘Man Christ Jesus’, and what Scripture says about Him is that He gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own times. What that means only God knows. ‘A ransom for all’. Think of the accumulation of guilt that attached to all; think of the power of death as having dominion over all; He gave Himself a ransom for all.

Well now we come to Moses, and Moses is a remarkable and most encouraging man. In this chapter twelve he is being spoken against by his own sister and brother, his sister apparently taking the lead. Miriam and Aaron “spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had taken”, and they say, “Has Jehovah indeed spoken only to Moses?” and it says “Jehovah heard it.” That is a very significant statement; let us remember it; “Jehovah heard it.” He is taking very serious notice of it. It says, “Then Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam”; He puts them in their proper order. “Miriam and Aaron” it says at the beginning of the chapter, ‘spoke against

Moses'; that is the wrong order. God puts them in the right order. He is putting Miriam in her place, and He is, so to speak, reminding Aaron that he is the man, and that he is responsible to take the lead. The Lord knows how to adjust us in all these things. "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, ... they said, Has Jehovah indeed spoken only to Moses? has he not spoken also to us? And Jehovah heard it." Then it says, "the man Moses was very meek", (or 'lowly', 'humble') "above all men that were upon the face of the earth." How did Moses become meek? He certainly was not born meek; none of us is born meek, I am quite sure we could say that. But Moses was "very meek", it says, "very meek above all men that were upon the face of the earth." And what God says about him as He takes up his cause is "my servant Moses ... is faithful in all my house." What a commendation that was, what an encouragement to us to seek to be faithful in relation to the Lord's interests. When Moses is spoken against God enters into the lists, you might say, in support of him, and He says 'Moses is faithful in all My house'. I am inclined to think that refers not only, but very largely, to his faithfulness in the construction and ordering of the tabernacle: because Exodus 40 goes over the ordering of the tabernacle in great detail, and time after time it says, "as Jehovah had commanded Moses". I believe the faithfulness on the part of Moses in all God's house refers largely to his faithfulness in the construction and ordering of the tabernacle. The tabernacle, of course, was God's house; it was His dwelling place amongst the people, and Moses was particularly careful to see that every detail of what God required in His house was provided for. So that it is a matter for all of us in our local companies to see that things are according to the mind of God. Moses was faithful in all His house. Of course, he was particularly faithful too, in the matter of the golden calf as we know. He stood in the gate of the camp, and he said, "He that is for Jehovah, let him come to me." (Exodus 32:26). But my impression is, that when God says, "he is faithful in all my house", He is especially referring to the faithfulness with which every detail connected with the tabernacle was cared for by Moses. All that God required in His habitation was maintained by Moses. Faithfulness in God's house is something that God approves of; we may all covet to be characterised by it.

So He says "the man Moses was very meek". What made him meek? I asked that question a few minutes ago. Well I have often thought of it, and I have ventured to think it was because he had on two occasions, forty days and forty nights on the mountain with God. (Exodus 24:18; 34:28). God showed him the pattern of the tabernacle. (Exodus 25:9; 39:32). He would no doubt explain it all to him; He would show him what the ark was to be; He would tell him what the ark was going to typify; He would tell him it was going to typify Jesus. He

would say to Moses, 'Jesus will not be the kind of man that you are, Moses, He will be meek, He will be lowly, He will be obedient, He will not have any of the features that are natural to you'. I do not think I am imaginative or speculative in suggesting that God would show Moses with great interest all the detail of the tabernacle. Moses records it by the Spirit of God in Exodus, and I have no doubt He would tell Moses what it all meant; and when He came to speak about the ark, He would tell Moses what kind of man the ark typified. I have no doubt Moses would feel, 'if that kind of man is the centre of God's system, then the sooner I take on the features of that man the better'. Anything out of keeping with it, would be out of keeping with that system. And so Moses, I feel sure, would become meek because he had spent so long with God, and because God would show him what He thought of Christ. So it says, "the man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth."

"Then Jehovah spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they went out, they three." It is remarkable how the Spirit of God records it. Miriam moved first at the beginning of the chapter and she was all wrong, and Aaron apparently allowed himself to be influenced by her, and he was all wrong and now God is putting them right, "come out ye three", Moses and Aaron and Miriam. "And Jehovah came down in the pillar of the cloud, ... and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. Not so my servant Moses: he is faithful in all my house. Mouth to mouth do I speak to him openly, and not in riddles; and the form of Jehovah doth he behold. Why then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?" That is how God vindicates Moses. In the previous chapter Moses had been marked by a certain measure of weakness; he had expressed doubts as to whether God could feed the six hundred thousand men that were amongst Israel at that time, and keep them fed. "And Jehovah said to Moses, Hath Jehovah's hand become short?" (Numbers 11:23) If God asks us a question like that it is just to subdue us and to make us feel how small and foolish we are. "Now" He said, "shalt thou see whether my word will come to pass unto thee or not." But then while Moses is marked by a measure of weakness in chapter 11, God is not going to allow Miriam and Aaron to speak against him in chapter 12. He says 'No, he is My servant', "he is faithful in all my house." 'I will stand by him'. But it says, "the man Moses was very meek, above all men that were upon the face of the earth." Well that was a great feature that marked Moses, 'Meekness'. Of course, every feature of moral perfection is seen in Jesus. Meekness is there peculiarly, and many other things too, faithfulness too,

but meekness particularly, “I am meek and lowly in heart;” but every feature of moral excellence of course is found in Jesus.

Now we come to Esther, and we have the man Mordecai—“the man”; we have the Man Christ Jesus, that is unique; the man Moses, his meekness is the thing which the Spirit of God enlarges upon, and his faithfulness to God in all His house. These are the features of real manhood, meekness and faithfulness to God, two features of moral excellence which can be found in men, and these things are put before us, so that we should desire to take them on. Well now, in the book of Esther we have this man Mordecai. And it says in chapter 9 that he became continually greater; “the man Mordecai became continually greater.” Now what was the feature about Mordecai? The feature about him was that he would not bow to Amalek. He would not bow to Haman; Haman was an Amalekite, and God had said that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation. God has no respect for Amalek; He is not going to tolerate Amalek. Amalek typifies sin working in the flesh. The flesh is that which Satan can work on, and God is not going to tolerate it; He says He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

Mordecai was true to that; Haman was an Agagite, an Amalekite, and the king had raised him to a position of great honour, and the king had commanded that every one should bow to Haman, and Haman was very keen to see that every one *did* bow before him too, for that was the character of the man. In the presence of these things Mordecai simply refuses to bow to him; he maintains God’s judgment of the flesh. Now that is an important thing dear brethren. I am saying this as much to myself as to you all, but I am sure we have all recognised that that is an important thing, that we do not allow the flesh, that we do not make provision for it. It says, “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought for the flesh to fulfil its lusts” (Romans 13:14). That is what Scripture says, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” it is a deliberate action of mind on your part, that we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”. His Lordship implies His authority; Jesus Christ is the kind of Man that He is, and we take it on; it is for us to take it on. Now Mordecai was one such; he would not bow at any price to Haman. Haman was the Amalekite and Mordecai was of a definite mind that cost what it might he would not bow to Haman.

Well now, we know the history of Mordecai; we know how the Lord supported him; we know how near the enemy got to him. We know that Haman got the length of actually having a gallows fifty cubits high constructed and made ready to hang Mordecai on it; it got as near as that, a gallows actually prepared

on which Mordecai was to be hanged, but it got no further. In the end Haman was hanged on it, and Mordecai was exalted. It says the 'man Mordecai'; he just represents that feature of true manhood, that would not under any circumstances surrender to the flesh.

It is a constant exercise to us all, while we are here, because the flesh is with us all the time. The Spirit is against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit. But God has given us His Holy Spirit and therefore why should we make provision for the flesh to satisfy its lusts? The great thing is that in the power of the Holy Spirit we have liberty to move toward God at any moment, at any time; we have ability to appreciate Christ; we have ability to appreciate the things of God. Wonderful things are open to us in the Spirit of God, and therefore we want to be careful that we do not in any way grieve the Holy Spirit. It says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30) And so true manhood for a believer lies in this among other things at any rate, that he does not allow the flesh, and that is what Mordecai stands for pre-eminently, and it says, "the man Mordecai became continually greater."

Well, that is all I have to say; it is a question of manhood, learnt first of all, and supremely, in Christ, but then we get these other examples; 'the man Moses', and 'the man Mordecai', and if it is put that way, it is intended to impress us with the features of 'Manhood' which shine in those persons.

May the Lord bless His word to us.

Alfred Gardiner

If you know of anyone who might like to subscribe to 'Living Water' please send me their name and address and a free copy of this issue will be sent to them.

Mark Lemon. 130, London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1BA.

THOU ART COMING, O MY SAVIOUR

Thou art coming, O my Saviour,
Thou art coming, O my King,
In Thy beauty all resplendent,
In Thy glory all-transcendent;
Well may we rejoice and sing;
Coming! In the opening east
Herald brightness slowly swells;
Coming! O my glorious Priest,
Hear we not Thy golden bells?

Thou art coming; we are waiting
With a hope that cannot fail
Asking not the day or hour,
Resting on Thy word of power,
Anchored safe within the veil.
Time appointed may be long,
But the vision must be sure;
Certainty shall make us strong,
Joyful patience can endure.

Then, the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee my own beloved Lord!
Every tongue Thy Name confessing,
Worship, honour, glory, blessing
Brought to Thee with one accord;
Thee, my Master, and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned,
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored and owned!

Frances R. Havergal

“Have patience, therefore, brethren, till the coming of the Lord.”
(James 5:7)