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EDITORIAL

This issue of "*Living Water*" marks the beginning of the second year of publication of this magazine. It is an appropriate moment therefore to pay tribute to the vast amount of work which has gone on behind the scenes in terms of transcribing tapes, proof reading, and other practical services. Without this unstinted help this magazine would not have appeared. I refrain from listing the names of the many helpers only because I know that they would not like it. The only reward they seek is the knowledge that they are serving their own Lord.

During 1994 circulation has increased steadily and I trust that under the good hand of God this will continue. We are living in the dark days of the churches spoken of in the book of the Revelation when there is a great need for christians to be established in the truth as it is in Jesus (see Ephesians 4:21). It is the desire of the Trustees of the Stone Publishing Trust that this magazine should contribute to this. Please pray that the articles that are printed may be for the edification of the body of Christ. While I accept responsibility before the Lord for what is included in the magazine contributions and suggestions on ways in which "*Living Water*" could be made more serviceable are always welcome.

If you know of anyone who might like to subscribe to "*Living Water*" please write to the address below and a free copy of this issue will be sent to them.

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Trustees of the Stone Publishing Trust:—

David Bond, David Burr, Mark Lemon, David Mutton, Keith Wickens. Jan Taylor, who was a Trustee was taken to be with the Lord in November 1994. The trustees would take this opportunity to express their real sense of loss in the home-going of our brother and their appreciation of his faithful service to the Lord over many years.

THE SIN-HATING BELIEVER AND THE SEEKING BELIEVER

The Sin-Hating Believer

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

2 Corinthians 7:1

As Christians we have to learn both to hate sin and to seek the blessing of others. We begin our Christian path like those who came to David at the cave of Adullam, people who were in distress, in debt and those who were of embittered spirit, those with all kinds of disadvantages and problems came to David and he became a captain over them, just as we with all our problems can flee to Christ and can find in Him the answer to the sinner's need.

As we go on in the Christian life we discover two things which are very important. One is that within us is the sinful flesh; we have the capability for sinning and we will retain that until the end of our life. The other is that we live in a world that is marked by sin. How difficult is a believer's position in this world! Within us we have the tendency to sin and without is a world of evil that is under the authority of Satan, the god of this world. There are all kinds of influences that tend to draw us away from Christ and our present joy in Him. Thank God we have a Saviour on high who loves us and who can provide support and grace for us every day of our lives. When we obey the glad tidings, God seals His work in us with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is a power within enabling us to overcome in this world of sin.

The epistle to the Romans sets out the teaching of the gospel. In Romans 6, Paul describes how a believer faces the challenge of a world of sin. "Should we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far be the thought". Romans 7 then describes how a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ finds that there is evil working within. Paul says "In me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell." I find I have a desire for the things of God, I want to please Him, I want to serve the Lord but I also find other things in my heart. I find in my heart a pull towards evil. These are very real things, and in a believer there is a struggle. We realise that as well as having a Saviour from the coming wrath, we need a present deliverer and cry out to Christ. It is a great experience to look out from ourselves and receive the help and support of the Lord Jesus Christ to enable us to be overcomers in this world. We can then say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord". We need to come round to God's view as to sin. I think this

is a process within us. As a believer grows in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus there should be a corresponding increase in his hatred and abhorrence of sin.

The passage in 2 Corinthians speaks of purifying ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear. That involves a process. I recognise that as in this world there are certain things I need to be free from, and there is a warning sounded here, "Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers". This world is full of all kinds of entanglements to draw believers away from Christ and into other things. I believe one thing that causes immense damage to God's people is getting into ungodly companionships.

There are many warnings about this in the Old Testament and I just pass on three of them so that we might think about them. The first concerns Lot. The Bible says that he "vexed his righteous soul" (2 Peter 2:8). I am therefore on safe ground in saying that Lot was a believer. But Lot drifted into an unequal yoke. First of all he separated from Abraham, a companion who would have helped him. Lot then chose the well watered plains of the Jordan and he pitched his tents towards Sodom. The next thing the Bible tells us is that he dwelt in Sodom, and finally he was in the gate of Sodom. Apparently he was one of the judges there, occupying himself with the activities of the city yet having real moral power with no one. He was unequally yoked with unbelievers.

It tells us in the Bible he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the abandoned way of life of the godless. This is a dreadful world we are in and it is not getting any better. Watch your friendships; watch with whom you get yoked. Poor Lot had to get dragged out of Sodom and he could not influence even his wife. She was turned into a pillar of salt; her mind and affections were taken up with Sodom. God took Lot out of Sodom. When the Lord's assembling shout calls every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ to be with Himself, none will be left behind, no matter how entangled they are in this world. But such entanglements mean that like Lot we miss having a life of service for God, a life of blessing like Abraham. I know that Abraham had his ups and downs, and so has every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But God cared for him like a father, as the apostle states here, "I will be to you for a Father". God looked after him, He looked after his household, He looked after all his circumstances despite his failures. God disclosed His mind to him in a way that He never did to Lot. Let us make sure we are like Abraham.

The Old Testament is a very important lesson book for believers today to illustrate truths of the New Testament. When the children of Israel went through the wilderness they had many experiences there; they learnt God in the wilderness. The hymn writer says that God is 'Patient, gracious, powerful, holy'. They were able to learn God's faithfulness as they went through the wilderness, but they had some bad experiences too. On one occasion they abode at Shittim (Numbers 25) and the people there invited them to the sacrifices of their gods. We like it when people are friendly towards us. These people were friendly towards Israel and seduced them with their wives. Eventually the children of Israel, who had been taught to serve the one true God, bowed down to the god Baal. The god of this world wants to draw away the affections of believers from the Lord into other things so that God is robbed of His portion from His people, and believers are robbed of the joy of their personal and their collective relationship with Christ. Be careful of the invitations of ungodly people. Be not diversely yoked with unbelievers.

I give you one more warning from the Old Testament. There was a man called Jehoshaphat, used by God and blessed by God. He served God well and lived according to the first ways of David the king (2 Chronicles 17:3). But Jehoshaphat allied himself to Ahab who was a wicked king and encouraged in his wickedness by his wife Jezebel. Ahab suggested that Jehoshaphat should help him, and Jehoshaphat says 'I am just like you', "I am as thou, my people as thy people". That might appear to have been true for both Ahab and Jehoshaphat were Israelites, but Jehoshaphat was a lover of God whereas Ahab was a hater of God and an idolater. Jehoshaphat entered into an agreement with Ahab. What was the result? Disaster. After the disaster took place God sent a prophet to Jehoshaphat and said "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate Jehovah?" (2 Chronicles 19:2). What a challenge to him! Dear fellow Christians, let us beware about being unequally yoked with unbelievers. Let us seek rather to purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, to perfect holiness in God's fear.

The Seeking Believer

1 Corinthians 9:19–23; 27.

A hymn writer wrote these challenging words:—

*'Who is on the Lord's side, who will serve the king,
Who will be His helper, other lives to bring?'*

I have been speaking about being on the Lord's side and standing for Him in His power in an evil world, but there is another side to christianity and that is seeking the blessing of others. Let us not forget that side! Sometimes with believers there is a tendency to go one way or the other.

Paul was a man who was free. He says "Am I not free?" and then "Being free from all I have made myself bondman to all." Paul was not unequally yoked with any unbelievers. He was not under the influence of anyone, not even his fellow christians. If problems rose up among believers Paul sought to stand for Christ and for the rights of Christ. Paul had his own strong personal link with Christ. I desire for myself and for others that we might be fully free, set free by Christ, set free by the truth. "Ye shall know the truth", the Lord says "and the truth shall set you free." He also says "If therefore the Son shall set you free, ye shall be really free." I believe that Paul was really free and because he was really free he was available to everybody. He did not shut himself in an ivory tower; he did not cocoon himself from the rest of humanity. He was separate in his way of life but he was not an isolationist. He earnestly sought the blessing of others. He tells us a little in this scripture about what he did and how he went about things. I commend this scripture to everyone of us here. You say, 'I am not Paul'. I know you are not and neither am I; none of us is an apostle, but I believe every believer should be evangelical. I am not saying that every believer has the skill to approach every soul, but every believer should be evangelical.

If I am with God, and enjoying the favour of His house, I will always remember that God's house is a house of prayer for all the nations. At the present time God desires that all men should be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world and if I am in sympathy with God I will not only be separate morally from the course of things in this world but I will seek according to my measure to be available to help others. Paul speaks here about

five different kinds of people. He says "Being free from all I have made myself bondman to all." Slave to all? Would you make yourself a slave for others in order to win them? That is what Paul did. He was free from all and yet he was prepared to be a slave to win souls for Christ. Do I really feel the plight of souls in this world? Do I really feel the fact that there are thousands of people dying every day? Possibly many are dying in their sins. I ought to feel this sad situation and God certainly does! The apostle Paul had imbibed the feelings of Christ! He knew the Saviour had sought him; he knew the way He had come to seek and to save him and he was anxious to go out to his fellow men and to win them for Christ.

First of all he says, "I became to the Jews as a Jew" (1 Corinthians 9:20). You can understand him starting with the Jews for he was a Jew. So he starts with those near to him. Who is nearest to you? Who is nearest to me? Do I feel for people I know, people I work with, people I live beside? Think of the way Paul approached the Jews. He went into the synagogue; he read a passage from the Old Testament; he explained it and drew attention to the Person who provided the key to it all, the Lord Jesus Christ. He showed how He was available to all those Jews gathered in the synagogue to be their Saviour, to be their Messiah. We can read about him in the Acts of the Apostles providing an opportunity first to the Jews to come to know the Saviour.

Then he says, "to those under law" (v.20). Who were they? They would probably be those people described in the Acts as those who feared God, people who were not Jews themselves but had come to appreciate and worship the one true God. Paul goes after them as well. Think of Lydia. There was a woman who gathered with others outside the city by the river where prayer was made. She was interested in the one true God. Paul spoke to her about the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul. She was gained for Christ!

The third class Paul speaks of were "those not under law". There were plenty of those and Paul met many in Athens in the market place. He met people who were not under the law. They were heathen; they worshipped all kinds of gods. What did Paul do? As he went about the city, his spirit was painfully excited seeing the city given up to idolatry. Paul was marked by the feelings of Christ while in Athens and therefore he was seeking to gain souls for Christ. And he did it! There were at least some in Athens who were gained for Christ during his visit there.

Paul then says "I became to the weak as weak" (v.22). Am I prepared to do that? There are plenty of people who are weak today, people who are disadvantaged, people who feel lonely. Am I available? Are you available to draw alongside those people? Are you available to seek them? A seeking believer? Oh, to be among the seeking believers, those who seek lost souls. Paul said "I became to the weak as weak in order that I might gain the weak." Think of what Paul told the jailer in Philippi. He spoke sympathetically to the man about to commit suicide, a man in extremity. What did he say? "Do thyself no harm." He was sympathetic towards that distraught man in the jail at Philippi. And then when the man wanted to know what to do to be saved Paul and Silas had the answer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." He became to the weak as weak.

Then Paul concludes the description of his service. He had thought about the Jews, about those under law, about those without law, about the weak and then he thinks about everyone! "To all I have become all things, in order that at all events I might save some." Paul had a heart for humanity, to gain all kinds of people for Christ. Even when giving his defence before Agrippa Paul was anxious to gain a soul for Christ. His objective was clear. We are now near the end of the christian era, and I believe the Lord is soon to come and we shall soon see His face. Let us seek to be faithful to Him while we are here, to stand for His rights, to stand for the teaching of scripture and not give up any of it. Let us also seek to take on the feelings of Christ, the one who came to seek and to save that which is lost. Let us feel for the plight of lost souls and seek to gain others for the Lord. I think we need stirring up to be more characterised by the spirit that marked Paul and the other apostles.

I close with a word of warning. Let us not discredit the gospel. If you desire to tell others about Jesus the Saviour I believe that is pleasing to the Lord, but do not discredit the gospel. Let us make sure we keep ourselves right. I need to do that; I am in danger every day and so are you. Let young and old alike take heed to Paul's word, "I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest after having preached to others I should be myself rejected" (1 Corinthians 9:27). In recent years the christian message has been discredited by the immoral conduct of people who have been preaching the gospel. Let us each take that to heart and keep our links with Christ clear, keep short accounts, judge things in our hearts before they lead to actual sins so that we might not discredit the wonderful Saviour who came to seek and to save the lost. May we take character from Him and acquire His judgment of evil in ourselves and in this world and, with

the help of the Holy Spirit, keep ourselves unspotted from it. May we also be marked by an evangelical spirit so that, according to our measure of the grace of Christ, we may seek to win others for Him. May the Lord help us all.

Ken Hollands

GOING HOME

John 14:1-6

I want to say a brief word about 'going home'. We sometimes use the expression 'she has gone home'. At times we sing about God being our eternal home:—

*'O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.'*

It is possible to sing these words, yet not to know God as our eternal home. He will only be our eternal home if we have faith in Jesus. There is no way to God the Father except by Him. In the natural sphere we have our homes; sometimes we speak of people being 'home builders', those who make a house homely. An empty house is hardly a home. In a home you find comfort. Some of us have travelled to distant parts, but we always looked forward to coming home, with someone there to welcome you. Fishermen go to sea for days on end. They look forward to returning home with someone there to receive them. There are rest homes and nursing homes which serve a purpose. We are thankful for them. Our sister died in a nursing home, but home in the way I am speaking of it involves company, agreeable company where love is. I say again, an empty house is not a home.

The words I have read were spoken by Jesus on the night before He was to die for sinners, for you and for me. "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day, according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3,4). He has now ascended on high, and as having died and risen again, He rules over both dead and living. Our sister is still under the authority of the Lord. He rules both dead and living, this

includes sleeping saints. Actually, our sister is in paradise in her spirit in the company of the One who died for her and rose again. She fell asleep through Jesus. He received her spirit. Paradise is not the eternal home. There are three references in scripture to paradise. It involves a very blessed sphere or state of soul; it is being with Jesus. Are you going to be with Jesus? Our sister is in the company of Jesus in paradise. Yet paradise is not exactly the final home; the Father's house is the final home for every lover of the Lord, for everyone who loves God. Do you love God? I can tell you that He loves you, "but God commends *his* love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us." All here are sinners. Maybe there are two kinds of sinners here today, those sinners saved by grace and perhaps some as yet unsaved. Oh come today to Jesus. It is wonderful; if you then fall asleep through Jesus you enter into paradise, into His company, the One who rules over both dead and living.

In the night before Jesus accomplished the work of redemption He spoke these words, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe on God, believe also on me. In my Father's house there are many abodes; ... I go to prepare you a place; and ... I am coming again and shall receive you to myself, that where I am ye also may be." Thomas said he did not understand and the Lord's answer was, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." If you come to Jesus, He will bring you to the Father and the Father embraces you as a forgiven sinner, confers on you the gift of sonship, takes you into the family.

The Father's house is yet future, but the relationships proper to it can be entered upon now. There is a place for every lover of the Lord Jesus in the Father's house. The great thing is to be in a state of soul now that if you die you will be received into eternal tabernacles, into the Father's house, enjoying conferred sonship and the embrace of divine love. Our sister will enter into that with you and me; we shall go into heaven together at the rapture. We are about to bury the body of our sister as "dead in Christ", but when Jesus comes again with voice of archangel and with trump of God, she will rise with myriads of others and with the living who remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air to be forever with the Lord and to enter into the Father's house, into the enjoyment of divine love eternally.

May we know something of the enjoyment of these things at the present time, for His name's sake.

F.D. Waterfall

FEATURES OF CHRIST — SUBJECTION AND DIGNITY

Subjection

“And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he was in subjection to them.” (Luke 2:51)

In this scripture we see the wonderful subjection of the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve. Think of the Lord Jesus going down to Nazareth, He who was so great in His own Person going down to Nazareth, and obeying His parents. Oh how great was the mystery of piety! God was manifest in flesh and there in Jesus in those early years we see this feature of surpassing subjection shining out. Little wonder Luke adds that He grew in favour with God and men.

In Luke 7 we read of a centurion who came to Jesus to ask Him to heal his servant. That centurion said to Him, “But say by a word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority”. He recognised a feature in the Lord Jesus that he had seen in its perfection nowhere else, that the Lord was here under authority as sent from God. The centurion discerned the subjection that shone in the Lord Jesus.

If we turn to 1 Corinthians 15 we read the words, “Then the end, when he gives up the kingdom”. The kingdom is not taken from Christ. I read in scripture of kingdoms being taken from this one and that one. The kingdom of Christ is never taken from Him; He gives up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father. This is the same One who in lowly grace went down and was subject to His parents, yet in Corinthians we are told that near the end of time all things are put in subjection under His feet. But then “when all things shall have been brought into subjection to him” (that is to the Lord Jesus) “then the Son also himself shall be placed in subjection to him who put all things in subjection to him, that God might be all in all.” This feature of subjection will be a beauty that will shine for all eternity. It will shine in the Son, it shone in Him here in this world. Let it shine in us. Let this feature of subjection be evident in the life of each one of us.

Dignity

“... who, [when] reviled, reviled not again; [when] suffering, threatened not; ...”
(1 Peter 2:23)

We never find the Lord Jesus losing His dignity. We lose our dignity so often. We step down from our true standing, but it is never so with the Lord Jesus. When the sons of Zebedee asked Him if they should call down fire from heaven, that was not His way. He departed in dignity to another village.

In the Acts we find Paul railing against the High Priest; that was not the spirit of the Lord Jesus. In the gospels we find the Lord Jesus assailed on every hand. In Luke 10 we find a lawyer seeking to catch Him out by a word. Does Jesus lose His spirit? Does He lose His dignity? Never! The Pharisees assail Him, the Jews seek to catch Him out but He goes on in all His perfection and not once does He abrogate the spirit of grace. It shone out perfectly in this blessed One. Matthew gives a lovely picture of the Lord in all His blessed dignity when he says, “and Jesus stood before the Governor”. Oh! what dignity, what majesty shone in this blessed Person. As the pressure grew more intense, His dignity, His majesty shone out all the more. I know of no one like Him! When reviled He reviled not again. Are we like that? When threatened, did He threaten? No He gave Himself over to Him who judges righteously. Oh I love this Person and I hope every one in this room loves Him as well. Watch the steps of Jesus in the last few hours before His crucifixion. He is apprehended in the garden of Gethsemane and they take Him to Annas where He is sneered at and buffeted. Then He is taken to Caiaphus where He is derided and ill-treated before being passed on to Pilate. What does Pilate find in Him? Nothing but perfection! Pilate sends Him to Herod who sees nothing but the majesty of silent dignity. Herod’s troops insult Him then He is sent back to Pilate again, to be condemned. See Him on the way to Calvary; with what dignity He has a word for those weeping women; “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep over me, but weep over yourselves and over your children.” Oh what feeling and what dignity! As we contemplate Him our hearts would be moved, as the hymn puts it:—

*‘And those closing scenes of anguish,
To our hearts Thyself endear.’*

Alex Mowat

GENTILE TRIBUTE

IN the dusk of Syrian twilight,
Brighter than a diamond gem,
Stood the star, and cast its lustre
O'er the house in Bethlehem.

“See again our guide appearing!”
Was the cry with joy untold.
“Judah’s King shall have the treasure,
Incense, myrrh, and finest gold.”

Incense to the LORD Almighty,
God of all eternity;
None but He can claim the tribute
To incarnate Deity!

Myrrh, for He, the Man of sorrows,
Shall accept the bitter cup;
All our woe is in that chalice,
He alone can drink it up!

Gold declares exotic beauty,
Far beyond all earthly ken;
From the loftiest sphere descending
Heavenly wonders brought to men.

Though the world deny His merit
(Like to Herod’s world of old),
Faith still brings the triple offering,
Incense, myrrh, and purest gold.

E.L. Bevir

WE ARE THE LORD'S

WE are the Lord's! In living or in dying
We are the Lord's, who once for us was slain.
We are the Lord's, and on His word relying,
We shall inherit all in Him, our gain.

We are the Lord's! Let us for Him be living!
To Him our body and our soul belong;
To Him our heart and voice would still be giving
The witness we are His—untiring song!

In the dark valley, when the day's declining,
No shadow shall appal us—for a Star,
With lustre never dimmed, is brightly shining—
True is the word of grace, "The Lord's we are."

We are the Lord's, His love shall never fail us
In the dire struggle where all efforts cease;
Yea, more than victors, though Death's dart assail us,
We are the Lord's! Eternal joy and peace!

E.L. Bevir

A HOUSEHOLD FOR THE LORD — 1

“... choose you this day whom ye will serve ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:15)

I want to commend this simple verse to you because if you dedicate your house to the Lord He will dedicate Himself to you. This has been proved by many of us over the years. Times may not always be easy but the Lord is always there with His support. We all need to make a committal to Him and He will sustain us in it. The time may come when you will have responsibility for more than yourselves; your household then is to be a place of refuge, a place where the Lord's name is held in honour and a place where those that love the Lord will find rest and ease as well.

Joshua had to take up responsibility; he had to tell the people of Israel where they were going wrong; but God was with him. The Lord will be with us in difficult days when we have to cope with the problems that Satan will try to bring into our lives. We read elsewhere in the Bible that “the name of the Lord is a strong tower” and as we commit ourselves to Him He will come in and help us. May you both find that together. It is something which many have proved. From generation to generation the faithfulness of the Lord has been proved and I would commend it to you.

Do not give up the things of the Lord lightly. God has worked in the hearts and souls of many and what they passed on by way of teaching and example is to be carried forward for it is precious. Paul exhorted Timothy: “But thou, abide in those things which thou hast learned, and [of which] thou hast been fully persuaded, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them].” (2 Timothy 3:14). So may each one of us lay hold of these things as well, committing ourselves to the Lord and relying on Him in every circumstance of our lives to guide and govern us and to help us. May it be your experience as it has been ours, for His name's sake.

David Mutton

A LETTER FROM IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH TO THE CHRISTIANS IN ROME

The extract below is taken from a letter written by Ignatius on his way to martyrdom AD 107.

All the way from Syria I have been chained to a detachment of soldiers who have behaved like animals towards me. I tried giving them money, but the more I gave them the more roughly they treated me. They are like a pack of leopards, enjoying their role as hunters, with me as their prey. Well, that has some advantages. I may as well get used to leopards now—it will be lions, and real ones at that, when I get to Rome. So I can make some progress towards preparing myself spiritually and mentally for what lies ahead. All I pray is that when the moment comes the lions will be quick about it.

Forgive me for writing like this... No power, human or spiritual, must hinder my coming to Jesus Christ. So whether the way be fire, or crucifixion, or wild beasts in the arena, or the mangling of my body, I can bear it provided I am assured it is the way to Him... to die in Jesus Christ is better than to be the king of the whole world. Do not try to tempt me to stay here by offering me the world and its attractions. Just let me make my way upward to that pure and undiluted light. For only when I get there will I truly be a man.

THOUGHTS ON UNITY

March 3rd, 1831

Dear Mr —

...Your description of the dear christians at —— is lamentable; sad, very sad, that the members should be so unlike the Head; and this, alas! is too true of us all. The transcript of the Spirit, though executed with exquisite nicety, is scarcely perceptible through the thick veil of flesh that covers it... Whether we look at the want of His power in His church, or of the fruit of His Spirit in His members, still we are inclined to ask, Has the Spirit of the Lord fainted? Is He exhausted? Where is He? Is it not this quarreling among the children of God the natural result of want of communion? The religion of Jesus especially enforces

and cultivates union. Satan's wiles seem aimed at the dispersion of the members... Must not the graces which are the fruit of love, want cultivation? Love suffereth long, is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, &c... I am sure the evil is not in differences of opinion, for this is the necessary result of increase of light; but our evil is more that we cannot allow another to see things differently from us. But we are in a warfare, and though not receiving wounds from the flesh in the shape of persecution, we must be receiving them from some quarter... Most painful, if from the flesh of a beloved brother or sister. But does not this even turn to us for a testimony? and does it not give opportunity of showing that the flesh is subdued by loving and persevering to love through all? If in every rub our concern is for His glory, having suffered, surely we shall then strive to disappoint Satan in our brother. All would be much easier to endure, if, instead of taking it as from this sister, or that brother, we could take it as from our common enemy, the flesh...

Faithfully and affectionately yours,
Theodosia A. Powerscourt.

EXTRACTS FROM THE TEACHING OF EDWARD DENNETT

Our true wisdom is in subjection to the will of our Lord. To human eyes no plan of taking Jericho could have been more foolish than that which Joshua adopted; but it was God's plan, and hence its complete success.

The one alleviation which always presents itself to my mind in cases of lunacy is that, even when reason has been dethroned, the spirit may be in conscious and intelligent communication with God. I formed this judgment many years ago.

A preacher will be so conscious that only divine power can touch a soul that he will rest in God about it.

At conferences people often find more pleasure in meeting one another than in waiting upon God, and then there is a lack of power. For many years I have noticed that when God is about to work He produces stillness—a solemn hush—and expectation. And the moment He does this Satan counterworks and seeks to divert the attention of the saints. We ought not to be ignorant of his devices.

I am coming to this conclusion that the more one ministers Christ Himself the more you can count on divine assistance. To exalt Christ is to be in communion with the mind of God. This will be our sole employment in heaven.

The great danger is the presentation of any truth apart from Christ.

A lady once called to see me and said, 'I want you to tell me the secret of power.' I replied, 'It is being broken to pieces and the consciousness of that.'

Edward Dennett

PLACES OF BLESSING

The thought before me is that there is a place of blessing, and a way into it. It is important for us all to find our place in relation to the blessing of God. It is not sufficient to know about it abstractly or doctrinally, good and important as that is, but that each of us may be conscious of being in that place in which God is able to bless us.

Blessing through surrender Genesis 32 :24-31

In Genesis 32 Jacob found the place of blessing by way of *surrender*. God's ways with him were to this end, and this must be our experience too, if we are to find the way of blessing according to God.

For a long time Jacob wrestled, for the spirit of subjection was lacking; there was resistance to the ways of God. There wrestled with him a man, but Jacob did not surrender until at last, by the power of God, he was subdued, and then he said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Whilst we exercise our own wills and resist the ways of God, there can be no blessing; but when we cling to that One whose powerful touch has subdued us, then we can claim the blessing and get it; for the answer came; "And he blessed him *there*." Let us encourage any who may be resisting the ways of God with them; God would deal with us tenderly and reduce that element of obstruction and resistance so that we may be found in subjection to Him. There is a place of blessing to be found here on earth.

Jacob was journeying, and God moved that he might be in the blessing of God in his pathway. Every believer who desires to be here pleasing to God is concerned to know what is God's way, and to have His blessing in it. While Jacob wrestled he received no blessing but when he surrendered then he was blessed. This is true in the history of many of God's children, that while there has been a resistance of God's ways or a resentment of them, nothing but sorrow ensued, and often disaster follows. But when by the grace of God that touch of divine power is given and the person is subdued in the presence of divine grace, from that moment blessing flows! How we all have to thank God for His ways! How tender, how powerful, how holy they are! While God does not condone self-will, yet He graciously deals with us to bring us to where true blessing lies—in surrender! It is a life-long lesson. It may be that the adversity through which so many of the people of God are now passing is God's touch to bring us to where we cling to Him, and say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." God would encourage our hearts by this. The coming day will bring to light the perfection of God's ways. How skilful He has been in the circumstances through which He passes us until we receive His blessing.

Blessing through communion with God Exodus.25 :21,22

In Exodus 25 God spoke of the mercy seat, so that man could be in the holiest in the presence of God and there in blessing. The secret of it all is found in God's word, "I will commune with thee". *Communion* is the secret of blessing.

May we each attach an increasing importance to communion with God; in the sanctuary, the holiest of all, where the ark of God was enshrined, was typically the presence of Christ. On the ark, in the holiest, was that slab of pure gold, called the 'mercy seat'. God has set Christ forth to be the mercy seat. It is where mercy and truth are met together (Psalm 85:10), where God can declare His righteousness and yet where His love is known. He can see the blood sprinkled upon it, for on the ground of the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ God can have man in His own presence, and we can commune with Him. It was before the mercy seat that God could righteously have man before Him: He said, "there I will meet with thee", and such are the conditions there according to God's pleasure that He adds, in wondrous grace, "and I will commune with thee". Would that we felt the importance of communion more and more! The lack of power and ability to meet a situation or rise to some opportunity of service and testimony may be traced to lack of communion. In

the sanctuary God would commune with us and speak to us of Christ, where His thoughts are communicated by the Holy Spirit. Let us encourage one another to make time for communion! There is no place in the universe so blessed, so wonderful, or profound, as before the mercy seat, where God can speak to us, and where we have the holy favour and privilege of speaking to Him.

You will recall the occasion when the Lord Jesus sat at supper and the disciple whom Jesus loved was leaning on His bosom in holy intimacy. Peter, recognising that John was nearer to the Lord in his spirit, beckoned to him that he should ask who it should be of whom Jesus spake, and John was at liberty to say, "Lord, who is it?" We would desire to speak to Him freely, with reverence but with confidence. We would commune with Him and ask Him questions. How tenderly and graciously the Lord would encourage this! He would have us ready to speak to Him of every difficulty that arises, but how He loves to communicate His thoughts to us! What a contrast this is to Genesis 3, when the LORD GOD went into the garden to commune with His creature man, but was unable to do so because sin had come in, and instead of being able to commune with him He had to drive him out of the garden!

What an incentive to communion too, was the attitude of Mary of Bethany! She knew the Lord well enough to sit at His feet and hear His word. She gave Him the opportunity of speaking to her; she did not pour out her troubles to Him at that moment, but she felt that this was the one place in the universe worth occupying. If we knew more of Mary's experience in Luke 10 we should know more of it as in John 12 where she anointed Him. These two incidents in the gospels illustrate the import and bearing for us of communion. There is now no reason for distance to be maintained. Even if we sin, God has made abundant provision for it. If a cloud has come in to produce a sense of distance, if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9). He will have His joy and the saints will have their joy as this communion is maintained.

Blessing Commanded Psalm 133

In Psalm 133 it is recorded, "there the LORD commanded the blessing". The secret of that was *unity*. The Psalm indicates the conditions for blessing collectively. There is much profit in considering the last four of the Songs of degrees—Psalms 131 to 134. The last four indicate the way of blessing for us,

“there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” Where? That is a matter of enquiry, and to answer that enquiry we shall have to review these songs. Psalm 131 says, “LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: ... Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother”. The spirit of a weaned child—the subdued spirit is there. In the presence of divine love and holiness there is a condition of soul ready to be led into the succeeding spiritual experiences. In Psalm 132 the psalmist unfolds his own experiences concerning the ark of God’s strength. As a boy, David had doubtless heard his father lament that the ark was hidden and ignored. No doubt, deep feelings were stirred in his heart, young though he was. God would stir up such feelings in the hearts of young people, causing them to long to find a place where Christ is honoured and given His rights. These earnest longings can never be met until we “find out a place for the LORD”, where His glorious Person is loved. Have you ever asked the Lord Jesus to lead you to where you will find those conditions?

The hymn puts it:—

*‘No place can fully please us
Where Thou, O Lord, art not’*

No true believer finds true rest of spirit unless he finds himself with those who give Christ the supremacy. No human abilities, no ritual or great display can satisfy the heart of a lover of Christ. Christ must have His place! The Spirit of God stirs the spiritual desires of many believers until they find the place where Christ has His place in the midst, where Christ is everything and where He is given His glory. Have you ever found that? Are you looking for some correct sect, or for that which will appeal to you naturally? It is the heart that is looking for Christ, that is searching for Him, that He values. “I sought him” said the bride in the Song of Solomon, and when she found him she would not let him go. Instead of having to examine all the errors of christendom and all the evil doctrines, we have, in simple affection of heart that would desire that Christ should be everything and in all, to seek guidance from Him to be led to where He is given His own glory and His own place in the midst. Have you ever bowed to the fact that He has a right to you, to your love, to your worship and adoration, and to your service? No claims can be compared with the claims of Christ, for He is the only One who has given Himself for us. When those claims are recognised He will lead to where hearts will find rest and joy in contributing to the praises of God, in recognising Christ as Head who must have the first place in all things.

David, in his devotedness, says, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD". That is the language of love! The one thing that matters is that the Lord shall have His place. He may be waiting for someone here to surrender their own preconceived ideas and be found in the place where Christ is loved and served. God desires that there should be on earth today a place for Christ, and it is found in His assembly. When we come together in the light and truth of the assembly, the Spirit of God having sway over us, God can say, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Thus as we come together recognising Christ's place in the church, and engage our hearts with Him, we can sing His praises and engage in the holy worship of God.

Now in Psalm 133 the psalmist contemplates brethren dwelling together in unity. It is God's delight to see them; it is good in His sight and pleasant to those who are together. In the previous Psalm, the priests are clothed with salvation; the saints are shouting aloud for joy, and here the brethren are dwelling together in unity. This all flows from the ark having its right place. When we are gathered together to remember Him in the breaking of bread there is no appointed minister, no prescribed order of service, no name is to be magnified but the name of Jesus. In such an atmosphere, with no objective but to glorify the holy name of the One to whom we owe everything, we can sit down together in unity. There is never a more favourable moment for expressing unity. We have unity of thought and heart about Christ: He has no rival. It is appreciation of Christ which produces spiritual unity, and as our thoughts are all concentrated on Himself, upon His beauty, glory and greatness, the preciousness of His death and all that He has accomplished, we bow *together* in adoration and worship. It is *there* the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. There is a great difference between attending a religious meeting and gathering together in unity to give the Lord Jesus that which He is entitled to have in our hearts' affections. Would that each one might be a contributor to this; that God may have the worship that He seeks, and that the service of God might be maintained under the mighty impulse of His love and grace—the love of God filling the hearts and producing response there, so that we may join in one heart in singing His praises and blessing His name!

What joy there will be as *subdued* by God's ways with us, *communing* in the presence of divine love, and dwelling together in *unity* and enjoying the blessing which is to be enjoyed there!

The Blessing of the Father's House

John 14:1-3

In John 14 the sons are in association with Christ in glory in the Father's house. *Love* is the secret of that place of supreme blessing. This is the consummation of divine love—the Father's house! The Lord brought this in to comfort those whom He was leaving. They needed comfort and the way He brought it in was beautiful, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." As Christ fills the heart it will bring untold comfort. And then He discloses the glorious secret of His Father's house; He would carry our hearts on to a future day, into conditions where there is nothing to disturb. In the unsullied light of God's presence we shall spend eternity in the Father's house, enjoying the Father's love and worshipping the Father with hearts responsive, finding our eternal occupation in the praises of God. Even the anticipation of it fills our hearts with joy, and while we wait for our Lord to come to take us home we would enjoy the affections of that place, and even now worship our God and Father in spirit and in truth.

Each of these is a wonderful place of blessing. May we each find them!

F.S. Marsh

CHRIST AS FOOD — THE MANNA

The manna has an important place as food for God's people. In contrast to the passover which applies to us in every position in which we may be viewed, the manna is distinctly food for the wilderness only; that is to say, it is food especially provided to help the people of God in their responsible pathway here. How gracious of God to provide us with food to support us in every position we may be in, according to His will! We need manna if we are to fill out the responsible pathway. Many of us have to go to business, and others have their household duties to perform, and the christian children have to go to school. All these are different positions in which according to God's will we are set here in responsibility; and what we find, as desiring to fill these positions to His pleasure, is that there is nothing in the world around us that will support us in them. The whole principle of the world around us is that man lives to himself and does his own will whereas we read that "even Christ pleased not himself" (Romans 15:3).

So the manna was provided as food for the wilderness and there was no other food provided. At the outset, for one day, God gave them quails; and then at a later period He gave them quails because they lusted after flesh. "Not one day shall ye eat, nor two days, ... but for a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it become loathsome unto you; because that ye have despised Jehovah" (Numbers 11:19,20). They lusted after flesh and they got it. "For he that sows to his own flesh, shall reap corruption from the flesh; but he that sows to the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). In grace God gave them quails for one day. It was never intended that they should live on quails, but just that they should see that God could do anything. Just by a word He brought up quails to feed the host of Israel. There is no limit to God's resources and power, and if it were His will to make everything easy for us in this life, He could quite easily do so, but that is not His way. He has in mind to humble us in order, as it says in Deuteronomy, "to do thee good at thy latter end" (Deuteronomy 8:16).

God intends that everyone of us should be marked by the great moral features of dependence upon Him, which is, after all, man's greatest and truest glory. Men think it is great to be independent, but He who is God over all, as having become Man says, "I was cast upon thee from the womb" (Psalm 22:10). That was how the Lord viewed the matter. It was His glory, as having become Man, to be dependent on God, and it is man's true glory to be maintained in the position of dependence that is rightly his as God's creature; and along with that is the great principle of obedience. Dependence is something that flesh regards as irksome, and obedience is something that flesh greatly dislikes; but dependence and obedience have been rendered morally glorious by our Lord Jesus Christ who, though God over all, blessed for ever, as having become Man did not desire a reputation but, "taking a bondman's form ... having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7,8). The manner of His death was one in which obedience was tested to the full, and it says, "Wherefore" that is, because of the moral excellency of it; "Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name".

We are intended not simply to accept these things as statements of fact, but to contemplate them, that the One marked pre-eminently and perfectly by obedience has been given a Name which is above every name. We are to be impressed with the fact that God regards obedience with the greatest pleasure. It is in His sight of great moral worth. These two features of dependence and

obedience in manhood are two great things which God would develop in us by means of feeding upon the manna, and He orders the circumstances of our wilderness path with a view to furthering this great end. He fed the people with manna and humbled them that He "might do them good at their latter end." If God brings upon us any circumstances which we find to be humbling, it is all with a view to doing us good at our latter end.

One great feature of the manna was that it was to be gathered daily. There was never enough for more than one day except on the sixth day of the week when God gave them enough to carry them over the sabbath, in order that they might know what rest was, but the principle was that there was just enough for one day, no more. That is a thing that God would have us learn in our responsible path, that a great feature of a christian's life is to be here governed by the will of God and renewed in it day by day. It makes life so simple if we take things up on that principle. It means that we are not looking a long way ahead and wondering how we are going to get on. We only have to look after today. I commend that to you. It is a simple thing to say, but I think a helpful thing to bear in mind, that all we have to be concerned about is today, and therefore let us watch what we have to do today. When saints get turned aside it has not all happened in a moment. It is always the result of departure from the Lord; of allowing something to come in that brings in distance; and there was a moment when it began, and if there had been watchfulness on that day, the day it began, it never would have begun. If we are watchful today all will be well. When tomorrow comes then it is today, but all we need is to go on one day at a time; and that is the principle in the manna.

The manna was given fresh from heaven every day. When the dew was gone there lay on the face of the wilderness a small round thing. How touching! In how small a way God came in in the Person of Jesus. He who created all things by His word, and upholds them by the word of His power, came into human circumstances as a Babe; into such humble circumstances as being in a place like Nazareth, and then in a carpenter's shop. Think of the grace of this, that He should thus come in order that He might become to millions of His saints, who would afterwards tread the wilderness path, food to sustain them there. When the writer to the Hebrews speaks about what was to be seen in the holy of holies he says, "and the ark of the covenant, covered round in every part with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna". There is no mention of a golden pot in Exodus. We would never have known it was a golden pot if it had not been for the writer to the Hebrews. He had been into the holy of holies

to contemplate it and he says, "the *golden* pot that had the manna," as if he was impressed with the glory of it, that the Creator of the earth should come down and fill out each day the conditions of human life, in order that in so doing He might become the food of His saints right through the wilderness path.

So that is the importance of our learning to appropriate the manna. It was a small round thing, and therefore it fits into any circumstances. Whatever circumstances God orders for us can all be accepted from His hand on the principle of obedience. It makes everything so simple. Six days of feeding on the manna bring us to a seventh day of rest, because the more the principle of manna is accepted the more we find rest to our souls. However testing conditions may be, you are in the will of God and will have His support. I need not enlarge on that, save that I believe to feed on the manna morally develops an order of man that can stand up in the wilderness in the testimony of God.

Alfred Gardiner

EVANGELISM — WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

The gospel begins in the heart of God

"...it is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
(2 Corinthians 4:6)

The first preacher was Jesus Christ

"...so great salvation, which, having had its commencement in being spoken of by the Lord, has been confirmed to us by those who have heard."
(Hebrews 2:3)

The power is not in ourselves

"...do ye remain in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high"
(Luke 24:49)

The gospel is about a Person

“..we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord...” (2 Corinthians 4:5)

“Evangelist” is one of the gifts Christ gave to His church

“...and he has given some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints;...to the edifying of the body of Christ”
(Ephesians 4:11 & 12)

Those who are not so gifted may have the spirit of the evangelist in their hearts and so be blessed in speaking to others

“Come, see a man who told me all things I had ever done: is not he the Christ? They went out of the city and came to him.” (John 4:29 & 30)

“We are not doing right; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace...” (2 Kings 7:9)

If we speak of Christ we may be derided and therefore not want to do it but we will feel worse if we give in to this temptation

“.. it is woe to me if I should not announce the glad tidings”
(1 Corinthians 9:16)

The gospel is often a matter of “reasoning” rather than just stating facts

“But in Athens..his spirit was painfully excited in him seeing the city given up to idolatry. He reasoned therefore in the synagogue with the Jews...and in the market place every day” (Acts 17:16 & 17)

“..he reasoned concerning righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment about to come..” (Acts 24:25)

We may not always see results from evangelism and if we do they may be due to the work of others!

“I have sent you to reap that on which ye have not laboured; others have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours” (John 4:38)

The church, while not preaching itself, supports the evangelist in every way.

“...having been set on their way by the assembly, passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, relating the conversion of those of the nations. And they caused great joy to all the brethren.” (Acts 15:3)