

No. 12

Living Water – Issue No. 12

Page

Recent Teaching

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH	Malcolm Wallach	3
An extract from an address at Leamington, 3 rd December, 1994		
SEEKING JESUS	Brian McLean	4
A preaching of the gospel at Peterhead, 1995		
FAITHFULNESS	George Greeves	10
An address at Wolverhampton, 13 th May, 1995		
JESUS STANDING—1	Ken Hollands	18
AT THE FEAST		
An extract from an address at Basildon, 27 th May, 1995		

Poetry Selection

LOVE'S TRIUMPH	Charles Deighton	16
TRUE UNITY	Charles Deighton	17

A Voice From the Past

ELIJAH	F. W. Trussler	21
PRICKED IN HEART	C. H. Spurgeon	23

Testimony

THE PROVING OF FAITH	23
Extracted from Missionary Gleanings	

A Word for Today

THE SANCTUARY	Frederick Raven	25
This address at Salisbury on 15 th May, 1901, has never been published before		

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THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Ephesians 5:30

This mystery is said to be great. I acknowledge that I apprehend very little about this mystery of Christ and the church, but the believer is to have an impression of what this mystery means. I think it is outlined for us in verse 30, “we are members of his body; we are of his flesh and of his bones”. Let me give you an example.

You have heard about Saul of Tarsus. He was a great enemy of God’s people in the early church in Jerusalem. One day he thought he would take his letters of authority to Damascus to bring believers bound to Jerusalem. Saul was a terror to God’s people. He dragged people off to prison and compelled them to blaspheme (Acts 26:11). What a threat he was: what a persecutor! He took people off to prison, men, women and children. As he journeyed to Damascus he was struck down and the Lord said to him, “Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?” (Acts 9:4). Now, personally, Jesus was on high in glory, but in his persecution of God’s people here, Saul was making a thrust at the Lord Himself. That is what I understand it to mean that we are His body, Christ’s body, of His flesh and of His bones.

So do be careful next time you take up a christian’s matters, and ridicule or mock them. You are mocking Jesus! Be careful with your words; be careful how you speak about any christians lest you say something or impute something that could reflect upon the Lord Jesus. It is a great mystery, and I admit that I grasp it very feebly, but I can see that the Lord has His people down here and they are of His flesh and of His bones. It takes you right back to the garden of Eden, when God brought to Adam his needed helpmate. He took the rib and built Eve from Adam’s rib, and it says, “Man said, This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:23). That is what this means. The assembly not only belongs to Christ, it is *of* Christ—it is of His flesh and of His bones. It is an important thing to grasp from the scriptures, by the Spirit’s grace that not only do we belong to Him as saved sinners for all eternity, but we are also of His flesh and of His bones.

Then, Christ loves the church. Yes, He loves you as a believer, but He loves His assembly. It says earlier in the scripture we read, “even as the Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it” (v.25). That is how much He loved the assembly. If you have got some light about the church belonging to Christ, of His flesh and of His bones, I think you have a duty in love, to be responsive to Him in that very connection. You respond to Him as

belonging to Him, and then as of Him, to afford some return to Him from the vessel for whom He gave Himself—He delivered Himself up for the assembly. “This mystery is great, but I speak”, says Paul, “as to Christ, and as to the assembly.” I would like to leave an impression with you of the wonder of this scripture. Dear fellow-believer, think about it please, and pray about it when you get home tonight. Understand something of the preciousness of the truth of what the assembly means to Christ. It is His body—“we are of his flesh, and of his bones”.

He is the glorious Head of His church. Wonderful riches and power flow from Him, and down here, in the scene of testimony and perhaps trial and suffering, we are to draw from that glorious Head. “*He* is the head of the body, the assembly” (Colossians 1:18). May we come increasingly into the light and the enjoyment of it. Not the light of it merely, but the experience of it as Christ affords light, life, food, and blessing to His church, the assembly, down here in the present time.

Malcolm Wallach

SEEKING JESUS

“Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified one. He is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they had put him”. (Mark 16:6)

We spend a good part of our lives seeking for various things. The advertising world exists to make us seek new things and if you think about it we are often seeking something new.

This verse in Mark chapter 16 which we read was part of the message given to the women who went to the tomb of Jesus. “Ye seek Jesus”. That is the greatest quest that any one could ever embark on, to “seek Jesus”. Between the cradle and the grave you must seek Him. Tonight He is seeking you! In the gospels Jesus likened Himself to a shepherd who had one hundred sheep; one was lost and the shepherd leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness and seeks after that one until He finds it. The Saviour is seeking you tonight.

There are some we are told of in the gospels who sought Jesus for the wrong reasons. Herod sought for Jesus when He was still a baby that he might destroy

Him. Judas sought Jesus to betray Him. Another Herod sought Jesus so that he might see a great sign before Jesus went to His death.

There are others too that we are told of in scripture who sought Jesus rightly. Nicodemus sought Him by night because he saw in Jesus what was to be found in no other. Jairus sought Jesus so that his daughter might be healed. A thief on the cross sought Jesus in his last dying moments and was given a wonderful promise. What about you? **Do you seek Jesus tonight?**

Many say that in this modern age that we do not need Him. Why should we seek Jesus? Let us go back to the angel's message when the birth of Jesus was announced: "thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). That is the reason we must each seek Jesus, because we are sinners. Jesus came to save sinners. He came to save each one of us for we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are sinners by nature, and sinners by practice. It is time that we faced up to our responsibilities. You are a sinner, I am a sinner but there is a Saviour. His name was called Jesus "for he shall save his people from their sins". Another has said Jesus:

Just
Exactly
Suits
Us
Sinners

There is no greater One than Jesus, the One who left heavenly glory and came down as a babe in Bethlehem's manger. It is a wonderful story, the story of Jesus. Think of the Father's feelings as His beloved Son came into this world. We get illustrations of it through the scriptures. I suppose one of the greatest is with Abraham and Isaac in Genesis chapter 22 when God says to Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, Isaac, ...and there offer him up for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22: 2). We get another illustration of it in Luke 20 when the Lord speaks of the vineyard owner who went away to a distant country and sent his servants at the harvest to get the fruit. What did the bondmen in the vineyard do? They beat and mistreated those who were sent. At last the owner says, "I will send my beloved son: perhaps when they see him they will respect [him]" (Luke 20: 13). What did they do? They said "This is the heir: come, let us kill him".

We read, "Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene". Think of it that He should be called a Nazarene! Nathanael could say, "Could anything good come out of Naza-

reth?” When they come to arrest Him in the garden of Gethsemane they use the name in hatred. Jesus asks, “Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus the Nazaræan” (John 18: 5). Pilate used that name in scorn in the title on the cross, “Jesus the Nazaræan, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19). But when Peter and John went up to the temple to pray they knew that there was power in that Name, “Silver and gold I have not;... In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazaræan rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). Wonderful Saviour!

The hymn writer says:–

*Came from Godhead's fullest glory
Down to Calv'ry's depth of woe;
Now on high we bow before Thee,
Streams of praises ceaseless flow!*

*Sing His blest triumphant rising;
Sing Him on the Father's throne;
Sing—till, heav'n and earth surprising,
Reigns the Nazarene alone!*

Not only did Jesus stoop into manhood, He came as we sang in our hymn, ‘Down to Calv’ry’s depth of woe’. A sinless life was not enough. The stoop into manhood was not enough. It was necessary for Him to go to Calvary’s cross. Not only is He “the Nazarene” but also “the crucified One”. Think of the pressure that came upon that blessed One when He who knew not sin was made sin for us. Little wonder that the gospel writer says that in Gethsemane as the Lord contemplated what was before Him that “...he prayed more intently. And his sweat became as great drops of blood” (Luke 22:44). I do not think we fully realise what it meant for our Saviour to be made sin. Jesus is arrested and later is taken to Pilate’s judgment hall. Pilate had a desire to please the people, but he knew what was right and what was wrong. Pilate knew that Jesus had been delivered up to him through envy. Pilate knew too that his wife had advised him to have nothing to do with this righteous Man; “For he knew that they had delivered him up through envy ...his wife sent to him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man...” (Matthew 27:18,19).

If you think that Pilate was easily swayed then remember that when the Jews protested about the inscription written above the cross and said, “Do not write, The king of the Jews”, Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written” (John 19:21,22). Pilate was not easily influenced. I see no regret or concern with Pilate; all through every gospel there is no regret with Pilate’s actions.

There is a striking contrast with Darius in Daniel's day. A decree had been made by Darius that no one was to bow to God, but Daniel faithfully kept praying towards Jerusalem. Daniel was brought before the king and accused and because the decree had been made Darius felt compelled to pass the sentence and Daniel was cast into the den of lions. But the king was very troubled about it and said to Daniel "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will save thee" (Daniel 6:16). It also tells us that Darius never slept that night, and he was up first thing in the morning to see how Daniel was. I see no regret or concern with Pilate; Pilate will one day have to stand alone before the Lord of Glory.

What would you write above the cross if you were given the opportunity? '*Unwanted*'? '*Jesus the Nazaræan*'? or would it be '*My Saviour there for me*'? We preach Christ crucified; to Jews an offence, to nations a stumbling block.

A young man once came up to a preacher in America and told him he did not like his preaching. 'I do not like the Christ crucified, I do not like the shed blood; you would be far better preaching of Him as a Teacher and as an example'. The preacher asked his questioner if he were to preach Him as an example would the young man be willing to follow Him. 'Oh, yes!' was the reply. Let us take the first step, "Him who knew not sin"; what do we do? We must preach Him as a Saviour before you can follow Him as an example because He was unique, "Him who knew not sin". You must have Him as a Saviour; He is a wonderful example, a wonderful teacher, but you must have Him as a Saviour.

We preach Christ crucified; yes, He was crucified nearly two thousand years ago on a hill called Golgotha outside the city. There He was made sin. Sin in all its totality was borne by that blessed One and there was three hours of darkness; I cannot say much about it but I know that also:—

*My sins—not in part, but the whole—
Were borne on the cross, and are gone evermore.
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

What a supreme sacrifice. There is no one like my Saviour, no one like Jesus—the One who finished the work that was given Him to do and having bowed His head delivered up His spirit. He was in complete control. A soldier pierced His side and there came forth that precious blood. Yes, my Saviour died, He shed His precious blood.

“Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified one. He is risen, he is not here; behold the place where they had put him”. I would like to look at the last clause, “...behold the place where they had put him”. This is most affecting, probably the greatest entrustment that has ever been given to man—the body of the Saviour. It says in scripture, “Thou hast prepared me a body”. Joseph of Arimathæa took the body of the Saviour off the cross. “Joseph of Arimathæa, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly... And Nicodemus also, who at first came to Jesus by night came...” (John 19: 38,39). Perhaps Nicodemus remembered that night that he came to Jesus when Jesus had said to him, “For 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). They take the body and put Him into the tomb. A stone is rolled there and the tomb is sealed. The story is over! Pilate had won, the devil had won! Jesus is dead—**Oh, No!** If the death of Jesus was the end of the story there would be no gospel! This is what makes christianity so different from any other religion. “He is risen, he is not here”. We sang in our hymn: ‘He is risen! glorious message’. There is no message like it. The tomb is empty! The hymn puts it triumphantly:-

*‘He lives, He lives,
Christ Jesus lives today.’*

The story is told of two young slave boys in Arabia and their master had always been telling them about Mohammed, bringing them up on the teaching of Mohammed and he told them that if they went to a certain city they would see the coffin of Mohammed. One day a missionary came to their village and he told them the story of Jesus and how He had died for them and how He had been buried and how He rose again. The two young boys went home that night and were lying in their beds and one said to the other, ‘Our master tells us that Mohammed is in a coffin in some city in Arabia’. The other one said, ‘Yes, I have been thinking of it, the missionary told us that this Jesus died for us and that He rose again and that He lives for us’. The first one replied, ‘Yes, I think we would be better trusting in the Living One!’ I can tell you tonight that you are better trusting in the Living One, the One who became dead and who is alive for evermore.

“He is risen, he is not here”. The One who has been into death is the One who rose a triumphant, victorious, glorious Saviour; Corinthians tells us, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins”. That would be a terrible situation. What was involved in raising Christ from the dead? It tells us in Romans that He was raised “by the glory of the Father” and in Ephesians it is a matter of the might of God’s power. In creation, He spoke and it was done,

but when it came to raising Christ from among the dead the power and the glory of God were there. What a victory. Christ has gone above all heavens, and that is the One who is waiting to save you tonight!

Then He is going to return. That is a glorious prospect for the believer. It is this same Jesus who is going to return, Jesus the Nazaræan, the crucified One, the One who has laid in the tomb—He is coming back soon and He is going to take those who love Him home to be with Himself. Will you be amongst them?

There are only the two roads, a broad road and a narrow road. You may choose to neglect the offers of God's glad tidings and continue on the broad road. We read of a rich man who chose to build greater barns, he chose to do great things but he also chose to leave God out of his life. It says of that rich man, that after he died, he lifted up his eyes in torment. That was his end.

There is a narrow pathway; there is just room in it for Jesus and you. I do not stand here tonight and tell you that everything will be rosy when Jesus comes into your heart; we do not tell you that all your problems will be solved overnight. There are some christians who have big problems, but I can assure you that Jesus will be with you to share the burdens. What a Saviour Jesus is, the Nazaræan who was in the tomb, who is now alive for evermore. He is coming soon to take us home to be with Himself for ever. Do not leave it too late before you make your decision.

The last entry in the diary of a missionary who was murdered in South America was, 'When it comes to the time to die, make sure all you have to do is die.' Weigh it up; it is good advice. Maybe there is someone here tonight who is leaving the acceptance of Jesus to a deathbed. Make sure of your position tonight. John Newton, the writer of Amazing Grace, two or three months before he died said, 'My memory fails me, I am forgetting most things, but two things I remember—John Newton is a great sinner and Jesus Christ is a great Saviour.'

The scriptures do not tell us much about heaven; they tell us about things that are not there but I do not think we can take in what is there. The story is told of a Scottish doctor who when he went on his rounds always took his dog with him in the car. One day the dog got out of the car while the doctor was visiting and came and scratched noisily on the front door of the house where the doctor had entered. The doctor's patient who was a christian had asked the doctor 'Can you tell me anything about heaven?' The doctor who was also a christian said, 'I find it hard to say anything about heaven but the best explanation that I

can give you is this. Can you hear that dog scratching on the front door? Well he has never been in this house before but he wants to get in because he knows that his master who loves and cares for him is in here. It is enough for us to know of heaven that Jesus is there.'

I trust tonight that you will seek Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified One, the One who died for you, the One who was buried for you, the One who rose again. Do not leave it too late. About ten years ago when I was one of the crew of a fishing boat, we started speaking about religion; we moved from religion to the Bible. Most of us on the boat were christians and so the subject got round to being saved. One of the crew seemed very concerned; he said, 'I never realised that getting saved was so easy but I am not sure if I am up to it'. There were those there who tried to show him the way of salvation; we all spoke about it and assured him that we would pray for him. No decision was made that we knew of; three months ago that man was killed instantly. I do not know if he ever decided for Christ. Do not leave it too late; delay is dangerous. If you feel the pleadings of the Saviour tonight, yield your heart to Him.

Brian McLean

FAITHFULNESS

1 Corinthians	1 :	9
2 Thessalonians	3 :	3
Luke	19 :	12 - 24

In looking to the Lord about this occasion I got an impression to speak about faithfulness. It is a commodity that is fast disappearing in this world. In contrast to that, Paul tells the Corinthians that "God is faithful". Paul wrote this a long time ago but it still stands; God is faithful. It is wonderful to be able to look away from all the unfaithfulness to the One who remains faithful.

One of the greatest ways in which we see God's faithfulness is in His eternal thoughts and purpose. It is blessed to be able to think of God in a past eternity with His wish to have myriads of persons that would love Him and would answer to Him in praise for ever. God is love. That was true before there was mankind for God to love. God brought mankind into existence to be for His pleasure, but He also knew all that was going to come in, and He made provi-

sion for it. But it was not just His power that brought everything through; God made provision that would involve tremendous cost to Himself. God, because He is love, was prepared for that and His love was made known through the giving of Jesus. God brought man into existence. God showed from the very start what He had in mind. He came down to commune with man in the cool of the day. God is going to have that eternally.

Satan came into that scene in the garden of Eden and as a result of the Devil's actions it looked as if everything was lost, but God would not be God if that was so. God was infinitely faithful to His plans and purposes. God showed immediately, in type, His answer when He clothed Adam and Eve in those coats of skin (involving the death of another) and in what He said to Eve about her seed bruising the serpent's head. God was looking to the great answer that He had in Jesus.

Man came to know good and evil by falling into evil and because of that God had to hinder man's access to the tree of life. God's thought though had not changed; it was that man should have access to the tree of life. So God did not cut off that access for ever. He indicated clearly that man as fallen could not partake of the tree of life but God had not changed His intention that there was to be access for man to the tree of life.

Think of the long period that elapsed before God brought in the Saviour. I suppose God gave man every opportunity to be faithful to Him and man utterly failed. Thank God for the faithful persons that there were. We read in Hebrews chapter 12 of the "cloud of witnesses", men and women that were faithful to God. But those persons, if I might say so, were the exceptions amidst the mass of humanity. Man proved his inability to be faithful to the holy God. What did God do? He brought in the Lord Jesus. Nothing greater has ever happened in the universe. When the fulness of time was come God sent His Son into the world. What faithfulness to man! What a witness of God's love there was in the precious life of Jesus.

We do not know much about the first thirty years of that life; what we do know was that He was committed faithfully to His Father's business. At the end of that time we get the Father's assessment of those thirty years in the words, "This is my beloved son in whom I have found my delight." Those hidden years had been faithfully devoted to the Father's service.

Then the Lord Jesus commenced His public service and persons saw the love of God in all its wonder. Jesus met every need, He expressed God at every

turn. What a testimony people had to the God who was longing for them to turn to Him. How faithfully God was set forth in Christ. But the Lord Jesus' perfect life was not sufficient to bring about what God required. All that lay upon man had to be righteously met if the tree of life was to be made available to men. What a way the Lord Jesus went. God delivered Him up for us all. In those three hours of darkness, when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross, hidden from man's eye, only God and Christ knew the tremendous transaction that was being wrought. We can never measure it, as the hymn says:—

*“But none of the ransomed ever knew,
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,
Ere He found the sheep that was lost.”*

How perfectly Jesus did the work, God was entirely satisfied and every divine claim was met. The veil of the temple was rent in the midst, showing how God was able to come out to mankind and that the tree of life was available to man. Oh the magnitude of God's work in faithfulness to mankind!

Then there is God's faithfulness throughout the present dispensation. God raised Christ from among the dead and set Him at His own right hand. Not only did God provide a Saviour and an answer to man's need but God in His faithfulness is constantly presenting to man the answer to his need. How worthy He is of an eternity of praise.

God is also faithful as Creator. After the flood God promised that He would not again bring in a flood, and He put the bow in the cloud as a witness to His promise. Every time we see the rainbow we are reminded of God's faithfulness, but God also gave man more than he had before. Up to that time man had lived from the fruit of the ground; God now gave him meat to eat. Out of that tremendous judgment that fell on this earth God gave increase. O the faithfulness of God! God loves to bring increase out of failure. I suppose we have all proved it, that God has blessed us even when we have failed and been recovered.

The scripture read says that God is faithful who has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Could anything be greater than that? God has not just taken us up and blessed us in Christ and left us on our own; He has set us in relation to His beloved Son. So we have a wonderful fellowship, with the Lord Jesus Christ as the centre of it all. The Man who has been such a faithful witness to the blessed God is the centre of everything for us now, holding our affections in relation to Himself and in relation to God. Thank God

for all who are in the fellowship of God's Son. One day it will be seen in perfection. We will all be together, all surrounding Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God will be faithful to the end. He will see us right through into His presence. "God himself shall be with them, their God". We may know God's own personal touch. God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. How near God will be. We will be with God eternally, in His presence. That is exactly what God wanted. It is far greater than God having man before Him in innocence as was the case in the garden of Eden. God has met every challenge and has man in righteousness before Him. It is the great fruit of all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

Then Paul says to the Thessalonians, where we read, that, "the Lord is faithful". He proved Himself absolutely faithful when He was here. It is one of His names, "Faithful and True" (Revelation 19:11).

How faithful the Lord Jesus has been. Think of how ready He was to come into this scene, "Then I said, Lo, I come (in [the] roll of the book it is written of me) to do, O God, thy will" (Hebrews 10:7). "When the fulness of the time was come" Jesus came into this scene. When the time came, in faithfulness, He took up manhood and with it the blessed name of Jesus. He came here faithfully to fulfil the will of God.

What a pathway it was, the Lord delighting in His relationship with the One He was faithfully serving; what a model for us, serving as a bondman, even washing the feet of His own. He could say to His disciples, "I am among you as he that serves". Scripture says He "humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross". The Lord Jesus measured the distance in view of removing it eternally. All that Satan introduced in the way of distance the Lord Jesus has met and removed. He went into death; what that meant to Him! "Take me not away in the midst of my days!", He could say. What life meant to the Lord Jesus, what it cost Him to face death and what it meant to Him to be made sin. The Lord Jesus was cut off in the midst of His days, in faithfulness to the great purposes of God. He lay in death; He was buried. There is only one Man in God's view now and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who was faithful to death.

The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and in His being set at His own right hand, God is testifying to His delight in the blessed Man who was so faithful to Him. Jesus is still faithful to the blessed God for He is serving us in view of our being for God's pleasure. What a work is going on at the present time; much is already completed but the Lord is working, work-

ing in your heart and mine. Very soon the Lord will finish His work and we will all be found in God's presence for His eternal pleasure.

It is a great thing to let the Lord have His way with us, to let His work go on; He is doing it for God's glory. When the Lord comes at the rapture that work will be complete. If any are taken home before the rapture, by the way of death then we can rejoice to think of the Lord's work being complete in a precious soul. In every one before God eternally the work will be complete; we will be capacitated to serve God for ever.

Well, if the Lord Jesus has been faithful He loves to find faithfulness in His people. If there has been any benefit from what the Lord Jesus has accomplished in us, securing us through His sacrifice, and if we have learned of the blessed Man who was faithful unto death, there is to be surely something of that to be found in those who believe.

I suppose we all start on the same platform; we have been completely unfaithful. It is good to start there. "All we like sheep have gone astray;" we have gone in our own way. That has not deterred God in any sense; God is true to His purposes. God could take up the greatest of sinners. Paul felt that; he could say that he was the chief of sinners. He had a very deep sense of what he had done and therefore he had a very deep sense of the grace of God. That woman who we read of in Luke's gospel, poured out her all upon the Lord Jesus. The Lord could say that she loved much because she had been forgiven much. Oh for a deepening sense of what the Lord Jesus has met in us. God is making something of persons who were hopeless cases—each of us!

I often think of Onesimus; he was a slave who had run away from his master, Philemon; we do not know the details of what happened but he had run away in unfaithfulness to his master. In God's mercy he came into contact with Paul and was soundly converted. So Paul could speak about Onesimus not as a runaway slave, but as a faithful and beloved brother. What God's work can do! God can do that with you and me, make us into faithful persons though we have been completely unfaithful. One would love to take up the pathway of faithfulness to the Lord. The first household that Paul came to in Europe was the house of Lydia and she could say to Paul, after God's work had gone on in her soul, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there." There was a work of God there that those servants of the Lord could identify themselves with. Is that not precious? What trophies God is securing.

This incident we have read about in the gospel of Luke is a picture of the present time. The highborn man has gone to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and return. That speaks of the Lord Jesus; He has gone on high to receive a kingdom, and He is going to return. It is a wonderful thing to be kept in the eager anticipation of His return. I very much desire that I might be kept watching and waiting, eagerly, for the Lord. We are not to be like the children of Israel when Moses had gone up the mountain and they said they did not know what had happened to him. Then it was that they fell into all kinds of evil. It is wonderful to keep our eye on Christ where He is. Is He not worthy of all that has been given to Him? The One that suffered has entered into His glory but He is going to come back, to come back as the king; He will reign and even though there are persons at the present time who have sent this message “we will not have this man to reign over us”, it does not make any difference. The Lord Jesus is going to reign.

We read of these ten bondmen—they are called, “his own ten bondmen”. They were, apart from one, persons in whose hearts their lord was already reigning. It is good to have the Lord reigning in our hearts and affections. The Lord can take us on then and use us as His own bondmen. The lord of these bondmen entrusted to each of them one mina. This is not the account of the talents. I might elect myself out of that saying that I have no talent but I cannot elect myself out of this. Each one of us has a mina. It is the knowledge of God in supreme grace. So we all have a mina; we all have something that we can trade with. It may not be very great; the value of the mina was not monetarily very great but it belonged to the king and it was entrusted to the bondman. If we realise that God has entrusted us with something, no matter what it is, we will take it up and work for Him. We can at least shine for the Lord in this dark world. We have found in Him a Saviour God; that is something we can talk about. Let us do what we can and there will be results because the mina belongs to the Lord. The wonderful thing is that He does not take it back. What you and I acquire in a greater knowledge of the blessed God and of the blessed Man who is with us, in our testimony and our lives here, we never lose. It stays with us, unless of course we are unfaithful bondmen. There is that warning in this scripture too. But if we have truly tasted of the love of God and His faithfulness to us we will not want to be unworthy bondmen. We will want to be here doing what we can for the One who has so blessed us.

God is faithful; the Lord is faithful; can we be faithful? The Lord says to those in Smyrna, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life”. What an incentive. May the Lord help us to be faithful.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH

O wondrous love that stooped so low,
Amazing grace that brought Thee down
To this dark world of sin and woe;
Sufferings unfathomed Thou hast known.

Our hearts are moved as we retrace,
O Lord, that lowly path of Thine,
And ponder o'er the matchless grace
Which did in Thee so brightly shine.

O perfect love, o'er all supreme,
Abounding grace displayed down here,
Its glory our eternal theme,
Its triumph will to all appear.

A glorious harvest Thou wilt reap,
The Corn of Wheat who here has died—
Thou'lt raise all those who in Thee sleep,
And take us *all* to Thy blest side.

And there at home with Thee above,
Fruit of the travail of Thy soul,
We'll praise the glory of Thy love
In song while endless ages roll.

Charles Deighton

January 1963

TRUE UNITY

Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 2:2

One *Object*—Christ in glory!
The Man who won our hearts,
Whose love, o'er all transcendent,
Unmingled joy imparts.
Our ears His voice attending,
Each eye Himself to see,
His glory all engaging—
This is true unity!

One *Spirit*, out of heaven,
The Earnest in our heart,
Bears witness of Christ's glory,
Tells of our heavenly part.
We all, His face beholding,
Transformed e'en now, to be
Unto the same blest image—
This is true unity!

One *body*, wondrous triumph!
God's masterpiece we see,
That Christ enthroned in heaven
Should here continued be;
The assembly is Christ's body,
With joy this truth we see,
Merged in this glorious vessel—
This is true unity!

One heart, to Him responsive,
One soul, with feelings true,
One mind to answer to Him
In all we say or do;
Thus bound in love together
As one, we'd loyal be
To Christ our Head in heaven
In happy unity.

Charles Deighton September 1962

JESUS STANDING — 1

AT THE FEAST

John 7 : 37-39

In this scripture we see Jesus standing during His time of public service here on earth, during a feast. It originally was described in the Old Testament as a feast of Jehovah, one of the three main feasts of the year. Israel was instructed to come together for eight days to celebrate this feast, remembering the time when they left Egypt and they dwelt in tents, dwelt in booths. In Nehemiah's day it was revived, and there was great gladness. But now this feast, one of the feasts of Jehovah, is called a feast of the Jews. Jesus did not go up to it initially. He went up secretly during the feast.

On the last, the great day of the feast, when festivities should have reached a climax, "Jesus stood and cried saying, If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink." There is a lot going on in this world, many things to keep people occupied, to make people happy, to retain people's interest; there are new things even this year such as the national lottery. But deep down there is an emptiness despite the entertainment and other things to fill people's minds. I am not saying that everything is evil—but lots and lots of things occupy the minds of young and old. There is an emptiness and Jesus is the answer! Much too is happening in the religious sphere. This was a religious feast, the feast of the Jews. What was missing? Jesus was missing. It is a wonderful thing, to know the One who can supply what is lacking, the One who can quench our thirst.

We started this meeting with a gospel hymn: thank God for the gospel. This hymn says:—

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold, I freely give
The living water—thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink and live.*

His gift can satisfy our souls now and will satisfy them for ever. Just look at Jesus standing there. All the buzz was going on at the feast to keep the pot boiling yet Jesus was outside. He was there but He was outside. But He had what can keep us going for ever and ever. Wonderful thing, the Living Water.

So He stands and He cries. This is His service. He knows the needs of humanity today.

Despite all that occupies people's attention and time there are many sorrows, much bitterness and numerous troubles in human lives that only Christ can meet. Get underneath the veneer, get beyond the advertising blurb, where everything claims to be the best and depicts wonderful schemes for the future. Beneath the veneer there are human hearts, millions of them, that only Jesus can satisfy. And He has the remedy! "If anyone thirst", He says, "let him come to Me and drink". See Him standing there, in Jerusalem. He knows the real needs of mankind. He had come with the answer.

We need to keep coming to Jesus. Coming to Jesus is not just a once-for-all experience. How often we get jaded. What we should do is to come to Jesus and drink again. He has the wherewithal to keep us going in freshness and life and vitality. Naturally we all need to drink to live; we need to keep drinking. The drink we had yesterday will not do for today. Jesus says, "If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink". What a word for humanity!

The hymn-writer expresses the experience beautifully:-

*I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.*

That is a very blessed experience for the individual, and that should mark everyone of us in our christian life. I wonder if it is marking us all? If not, come again to Jesus. Find that He is the same, the same blessed Saviour you came to know originally. You can live in Him, live by these fresh supplies that come from our living Head in heaven. Jesus did not stop there. "He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." *Christianity does not stop when I get my need satisfied.* God's intention is that from every believer, there should be something flowing out. Thank God if we drink in what comes from Christ: God's intention is that it might also go out, that it might go out to benefit others!

Peter must have grasped this concept, because he speaks in his epistle not only about inheriting blessing, but about blessing others ("blessing others, because

ye ...inherit blessing” 1Peter 3:9). That is what a christian should be. He or she is not only enjoying the blessing of God personally but is a blesser. You can be a blesser! You do not need to be old: you do not need to be young. You can be a blesser, a source of good in this troubled, defiled, dissatisfied world. That is what a believer should be—not only drinking in the blessing of God Himself, but a source and influence for good.

“Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”, involves a living supply flowing out from a believer on the Lord Jesus, but each must keep drinking to keep the ‘reservoir’ filled. If I drink a teaspoonful of water, there is not going to be very much flowing out! If I drink a tablespoonful of water there would not be very much that flows out. If I drink a cup of water, there might be a little that flows out. We need to keep drinking, keep drinking from Christ. I think we need to be drinking in more of the love of Jesus; drinking in more of the supplies of heaven from our living, glorious Head so that there might be a living flow outwards. For something to flow out there must be something that flows in. God’s intention was there might be something flowing out from everyone of our lives. Notice this is living water. A believer on the Lord Jesus, living in the light of Christ, has a clean influence, an influence for good in this world. We live in a world of unrighteousness. We live in a world of defilement. A believer on the Lord Jesus Christ who does not swear, who seeks to be upright in practical affairs, is an influence for good. A believer on the Lord Jesus who drinks in the supplies of Christ will seek to represent Him in this world; will seek to do practical things that will manifest the righteousness of God. I recently met a brother and sister who did many practical things in the street where they lived and their neighbours came asking for their prayers. That illustrates a living outward flow from the lives of people who are contented and enjoy their living link with Jesus.

This is quite a challenge to every christian. Take a look at Jesus. He stands there crying, “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.” And then He speaks of receiving the Spirit, which would be given from Himself after He had accomplished His work on Calvary and ascended to the right hand of God. Within the believer, in the gift of the Spirit, there is a source to enable him to be beneficial in this world. As believers we all have responsibilities towards the world in which we live, towards the community in which we live. I do not mean that believers should take part in politics. But I believe we have obligations towards our fellow men. You say, My obligation is to be true to the Lord. Yes. You say, My obligation is to be under His control. Yes it is. My obliga-

tion is to obey His word. Yes it is. But we also have an obligation to be a channel of practical care and help and a clean influence, a beneficial influence in this world. I think we need to take up this challenge today, each one of us, according to our measure. But in order to flow out we need to drink in. Let us drink in all the more of what comes from a living Christ so that more might flow out from us for His glory.

Ken Hollands

In the next issue, God willing: Jesus Standing – Amongst His Own

ELIJAH

“Elias was a man of like passions to us, and he prayed with prayer that it should not rain; and it did not rain upon the earth three years and six months; and again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth caused its fruit to spring forth.” (James 5:17 & 18)

Elijah loved God’s people and laboured to bring them into the greatness of what was in the purposes of God for them. To get the rain Elijah had to put his face between his knees; that is what we learn from the account in Kings of this incident which James refers to. He says that Elias was a man of like passions to ourselves, meaning that he was not a superman. What he devoted himself to was one thing, and what we may devote ourselves to is another. He loved God’s people, he loved Israel; he loved the twelve tribes. At one time he thought he was the only one who did so, but God corrected him on that.

God can correct us. He may have to do a lot of correction. If we are carrying things in our minds that are not right He can correct us so as not to destroy our usefulness, because God likes to keep us useful. Elijah was useful, and he was a prophet, a bold one; and we need to be bold, we need to have courage. Do not get frightened at the difficulties. Many get frightened at the difficulties, for they seem beyond them; but Elijah was not like that, he was a courageous man, yet he fled from Jezebel. So you might say, ‘Where was his courage?’ But still God protected him.

God does not expose us unless He has to. You can look back over your life and see that, can you not? It is good to look back over your life at times and see how God has acted with you, towards you, and in you too. Not only has He saved you from many disasters, but He could have exposed you, but He did not do so. God in His patience kept on with us and brought us round to His judgments and to His viewpoint and brought about a state of contrition in our souls too. How good it is to be kept in a state of contrition in our souls and to be lowly! As soon as we get anything but lowly, then we are in danger; but we want to keep lowly, committed to God, committed to His interests, committed to His people.

Elijah loved God's people. In the incident recorded in James he was not acting on his gift because we do not need a gift to pray. We need right, clear relations with God. The best way to serve God's people is to be able to get to God. According to 1 Kings he put his face between his knees; such was the power that was required to move God that the rain might come. But he went through it seven times; seven times he sent his servant to look and for six of those times there was nothing. Then on the seventh occasion he saw that a small cloud about the size of a man's hand was coming. So that is Elijah. How many are there who are marked by the spirit of Elijah?

Many Elijahs are needed. I suppose there is an Elijah needed in every christian company, one who prays to God for His people here. What needs there are! You may say that Christ is in heaven to keep God in touch with His people, but then God rejoices in those that go to Him, praying for the needs of His people. Have you been to God today to speak to Him about the needs of the believers in Wellington? Can you afford to miss a day? Could you afford to miss a day in your piety? You could not. So you cannot afford to miss a day without going in to God in relation to what He has here.

Get accustomed to going in to God in relation to the welfare and spiritual prosperity of the people of God in the locality in which you are. Pray for those who are growing cold. Pray for those who are enthusiastic in regard of the testimony. Keep Him informed about it and move Him so that He might do more and more.

That is Elijah; and James says that he is a man of like passions to us. So you cannot excuse yourself, you cannot elect yourself out of this at all; because if you are just the same as he, then why do you not do the same as he? Why not

do the same as Elijah did, if you are just the same as he? If you are in no way stronger than he and no weaker than he, and your circumstances are not more difficult than his but lighter, then you can do just the same as he did. And what did he do? He kept Jehovah well informed about current needs in Israel and urged God to come in with blessing in giving rain; and He did so too.

F. W. Trussler

PRICKED IN HEART

“When they heard this they were pricked in heart” (Acts 2:37)

Of one thing I am sure, that nothing ever pierced my heart like the discovery of God’s boundless love in giving His beloved Son to die for me.

C. H. Spurgeon

THE PROVING OF FAITH

(A story from the days of the cold war)

An active christian worker in a communist land was arrested and taken to the Secret Police Interrogation Room. There he found a Secret Police Officer and a doctor sitting at a table. Lying open on the table was a Bible. The christian prisoner was ordered to sit down and the interrogation began. He was asked:

‘Do you believe that the Bible is God’s word?’

He answered ‘Yes’.

The Secret Police Officer then asked him to read Mark 16:18 aloud. The christian read: “and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

‘Do you believe this part of the Bible?’ the officer demanded.

The christian replied, ‘Yes’.

The officer then placed a filled glass on the table, explaining ‘In this glass there is a strong poison; If the book is true, as you insist, it will not harm you to drink it. To show that we are not bluffing watch this.’ The officer then called for a large dog and made it drink the liquid. In a few minutes the dog collapsed on the floor and died. The officer looked at the christian and asked, ‘Do you still claim that this book you call God’s word is true?’

The christian answered, ‘It is God’s word, it is true.’

‘Then drink the entire glass!’ shouted the officer.

The believer knew that this was his supreme test. He asked for permission to pray before drinking the poison and this was granted. He knelt down at the table, took the glass in his hands and began to pray. He prayed for his family, that they might remain steadfast in the faith. He prayed for the communist officer and for the doctor sitting there that they might find God and become believers. Then closing his prayer he said, ‘Oh Lord, Thou seest how they have challenged Thee. I am ready to die but I believe in Thy word that nothing shall happen to me. Should Thy plan be different I am ready to meet Thee. My life is in Thy hands, may Thy will be done.’

With that he lifted the glass and drank it down.

The Secret Police Officer and the doctor were surprised. They had expected him to crack first. They sat there waiting for him to collapse, just as the dog had done. Moments passed into minutes. Minutes seemed to be like hours. Complete silence filled the room. The doctor made the first move. He took up the christian’s arm and felt his pulse. It was normal. He looked for other symptoms. There were none!

Expressing astonishment, he continued his examination but could find no trace of harm whatever. As the examination continued the doctor became more and more perplexed. Finally he slumped into a seat, paused for a moment, then reached out for the Bible. Holding on to it he said ‘From today I also will believe this book. It must be true. I, too, am ready to believe this Christ who has performed this miracle before my very eyes’.

Extracted from “Missionary Gleanings” 1969, Edited by William Missen.

THE SANCTUARY

Psalm 73

Luke 9 : 28-36

10 : 38-42

15 : 21-24

I desire to make a few remarks in regard to the sanctuary. In Psalm 73 you get the thought of the sanctuary and the effect produced by the sanctuary or, I should say, by God as seen in the sanctuary. One can understand a christian being troubled by the outward appearance of things in the world. We might well be disposed to think with the psalmist, 'What is the good of our standing in separation when we see the course things are taking in the world, the prosperity of the wicked, etc.' A great many christians are affected by things in the world. They may be seeking to maintain separation from the world and yet be painfully affected by things in the world.

The psalmist's judgment is completely altered as to things in the world when he gets into the sanctuary. In the sanctuary he saw the meaning of things which had puzzled and distressed him before. His sense of things is completely changed. In the sanctuary he finds out what the end of the world is, the world in which we are. The world as it is now constituted has an end. What brought about such a change in the psalmist's thinking was the discovery that God had another world before Him of an entirely different character, and through that, he was enabled to see the end of the world that now is. That is of very great gain for us. I have some apprehension of the world which is established in Christ, and in the apprehension of that world I can bear to contemplate the end of this world. I can understand, too, why God allows things to go on and tolerates the wickedness here, because He waits until the evil is ripe before displaying the world which He has established in the Head.

What was true in the psalmist's time should be true to us. The same world still goes on, a world which is marked by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. A world where the wicked prospers and the righteous sometimes go to the wall. Our view is entirely changed if we apprehend the world God has before Him and which He has established in Christ. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of

all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel”. All that describes in a kind of way the world to come, that world which God has before Him and which He has established in Christ. People may read scripture but I do not think that reading scripture will bring it home to them. It is in the sanctuary where people get a view of the world to come in which God will be glorified. “After the glory thou wilt receive me.”

Now I want to show you in the New Testament where you get the thought of the sanctuary. To us Christ is the sanctuary. On the mount of transfiguration a voice came from the cloud. “There came a cloud, and overshadowed them:... And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him”— expressing divine complacency in Christ. Surely that was the sanctuary. The mercy-seat was there and the ark of the covenant. The mount was called the holy mount by Peter in his epistle on account of what took place there. It did not change its character materially but it was called the holy mount because of what transpired upon it. The holy presence of God was there, finding His delight in His beloved Son. Christ was the point where divine complacency rested. Moses and Elias disappeared and the voice came from the glory, “hear him”. What we get in that really is that the sanctuary approached man. The effect of that is that you get a charge on the part of God to hear Christ. All the testimony of Moses and Elias is merged in Christ, and Christ alone is to be heard. Christ is the great central figure of scripture. The scriptures testify of Christ.

I only touch upon that particular scene on account of the word you get from the glory: “hear him”. I have no doubt it brings before us the truth the apostle expresses in 2 Corinthians 5. “God was in Christ”. There was a point of complacency for God here on earth; there was one single spot of complacency for God. In result everything is to be brought into connection with Christ, so that all is to be in divine complacency. That is what I understand by reconciliation, so that God can rest in His love. All is to be taken up in Christ. No voice is to be heard now but the voice of Christ.

I pass on to Mary. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus. Where do you think the sanctuary was there? The glory had departed from Israel years before. Ezekiel saw it before it went but the glory was on the mount. God is going to have a world in which He will be glorified and where all will be for His pleasure,

where all will be not under the curse but under the blessing of God. With regard to Mary, where do you think the sanctuary was to her? I do not think the sanctuary was in the temple to her. Christ was the temple to her. The Lord speaks of it. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Christ was the sanctuary to Mary. She sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word. She felt there was something to be learnt in Christ. She was bent upon entering the holiest. Christ was the sanctuary to her in whom she could learn all the secrets of God and the Lord commended her. "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her". The same thing is true to us. The sanctuary to us is Christ. We want to learn all that is involved in the Head. We want to understand the purpose of God, to reconcile all things to Himself by Christ, that God may have complacency in all. There will be a universe of bliss which Christ will fill, and where God will be all in all, and will be completely and eternally glorified. Mary had the consciousness that there were secrets to be learnt in Christ and she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word. Do you think Mary thought of anything else? Did she concern herself about the priests or the outside world? She was entirely engrossed with Christ, and she was bent upon learning the secrets in Christ. He to her was the sanctuary.

I wonder if we are as earnest as she was. Do we account it the *one* thing needful? It is a very great thing to have chosen that good part. If so, we shall be separate to a large extent from the interests of the world. We shall get a sense of the judgment that lies on this world and all it is coming to. We shall be separate from the world because we have got the apprehension of another world in Christ, a world in which God will be completely and eternally glorified.

In Luke chapter 15 you get a man in accord with the sanctuary. What I should understand the prodigal to present is a man in the reality of reconciliation. He was reconciled and brought into the house. He had the best robe on him and the shoes on his feet and he was in the reality of reconciliation. It was not simply that he had accepted reconciliation but he was in the good and benefit of reconciliation. If you are in the good of reconciliation you are in perfect accord with the sanctuary. That is the point to which God would bring us. "You ... hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Colossians 1:21,22). That is the thought of Christ in connection with our reconciliation. If you are holy, unblameable and unreprouvable you are in accord with the sanctuary. All that is

practical; it is that which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God so that we should be in accord with the sanctuary. It is not only that we should choose the good part and learn the secrets of God, but at the same time that we should be in accord with the sanctuary. That is what God is working to bring about in a people down here.

Christianity exists in the work of the Spirit down here which is giving effect to all the purpose of God in us. God would have us to be in accord with His glory. The church could not come down from heaven having the glory of God if all were not in accord with that glory. The Spirit of God works in God's people down here that we should be in accord with that glory. We are in accord with God's love and we refuse all uncleanness and all that is unsuited to the holy love of God. It is not a question of standing. I look upon it really as being the best robe, the work of God in the saints forming them according to the glory of God so that we can bear the blaze of that glory. It ought to engage our attention. There is nothing so momentous. God will have a vessel, the church, and her light like unto a stone most precious and God is forming that vessel now.

There are two things by which it is formed, first, the love of God into which we are brought, and the other is the discipline of God which is to rebuke every working of the flesh, so that we are holy and unblamable and unprovable in His sight. What is going on now is the forming of the vessel for His glory. We have very great privileges now; we have entrance into the mystery of Christ, but there is the work of the Spirit of God to bring us into accord with that glory—the best robe—so that we are at home with the Father and can enter into the Father's delight in the Son in the scene where He is. An appeal comes from there—"hear Him". Mary answered to that appeal and hear Him she did. She wanted to enter into the mystery of Christ. The Lord taught her wonderful things. The Spirit has now come so that we can enter into the mystery of Christ and we can form a judgment of the true character of the world about us.

Frederick Raven

**"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain
of thine inheritance,
The place that thou, Jehovah, hast made thy dwelling,
The Sanctuary, Lord, that thy hands have prepared."
(Exodus 15:17)**