

Living Water — Issue No 23

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THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 3: 34
7: 37-39
14: 16
16: 7-8
16: 13-14
Revelation 22: 16-17

I seek the Lord's help to speak about the Person of the Holy Spirit. The excellent name that was called over us at baptism included the name of the Holy Spirit. The declaration of God by the Son is not only the making known of the Father's name but the making known of the Holy Spirit and John's gospel abundantly shows this. Our dispensation is characterised by the great truth of Christ risen and ascended and the Holy Spirit here on earth.

I remember visiting an elderly christian who would have been in her eighties. She was reading a little book and was thrilled to tell me she had discovered that the Holy Spirit was a Person, not merely a power or influence but a divine Person, and she was thrilled with the discovery!

We can look back over the Old Testament and we can learn the place that the Holy Spirit had then. We read that God garnished the heavens by His Spirit (Job 26: 13). We read of the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters (Genesis 1: 2) and later on we read of His pleading and striving with men in Noah's day. We read of the Spirit of God coming upon men, moving them and using them to speak and to do things for God, but now, this same divine Person has come to dwell in the hearts of all those who believe in Jesus.

This wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit was part of the gospel which was preached at Pentecost; those who repented and were baptised would receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. There are those who would like to repeat Pentecost but Pentecost is not repeated neither is it withdrawn.

The Holy Spirit has come. The men at Ephesus said, "We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was come" (Acts 19: 2). That scripture is not a basis for teaching delay in reception of the Holy Spirit, because they had not heard the Christian gospel; they did not appear to know that Jesus had made atonement for sin and that He was risen and glorified. All that they knew was the baptism of John, but as soon as they heard the fulness of the gospel they believed and the apostles laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Paul said to the same saints in his letter, "Having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1: 13). God delights, when a person repents and believes in the Lord Jesus, to seal His work with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit for the assurance of salvation. The consciousness that our sins are forgiven is part of the witness of the Holy Spirit (Hebrew 10: 14, 15), and it is by the Holy Spirit that we have a living link with our Saviour in heaven (Romans 8: 9) and with one another.

Here today we have very different backgrounds yet we have a living link together in the Holy Spirit. "In the power of one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body" (1 Corinthians 12: 13). When we meet other believers we feel one with them in Christ and in the Spirit. It appears today that those who make much of the baptism of the Spirit seem to concentrate on the gifts and signs whereas the word of God connects the thought more with the consciousness of our place in the body and our relationship with one another. -

Where we read in John chapter 3 we are told that "God gives not the Spirit by measure". Faith is given by measure; He gives to each a measure of faith (Romans 12: 3) but the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, and is given without measure. Our measure and our appreciation of the Holy Spirit may be very limited but God's giving is not. The thought is continued in chapter 7 of John's gospel where we get the suggestion of the plenitude and fulness of the Holy Spirit as given to believers. The Lord Jesus was speaking on the last, the great day of the feast. It should have been a time of joy and great satisfaction among God's people, but in fact it was the very opposite and we find the spirit of murder in the hearts of the Jews toward Jesus.

On that day, Jesus stands and cries. There is an urgency as He says: "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink". The Jews were going on with an outward form, and we might be like that ourselves and yet at the same time feel an inward longing for something living and real. That is the purpose of the invitation of the Lord Jesus. If there is anyone thirsty, if there is anyone with a longing for what is vital and living in relation to God, the word is, "let him come to Me and drink". "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water". If we come to Him and drink we will have this river of life flowing out of us.

In chapter 4 the fountain is springing up to everlasting life but in chapter 7 the river is flowing out. God's people had become totally self-centred and this feast had become centred around themselves, their own ideas and ceremonies. They

had no thought of others, and we can be like that. The feast of tabernacles was to embrace the widows and the bondmen and the bondwomen and even the stranger. I wondered if the Lord Jesus was thinking of that, that the people had forgotten the joy and blessing of God's presence and that this blessing was to be shared with others.

So Jesus says, "Out of his belly ..." These are unusual thoughts that the Lord speaks of here. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water and John says, "this he said concerning the Spirit". The Holy Spirit in a believer would produce deep inward feelings and life. Paul speaks of bowels of compassion, long suffering, mercy and so on (Colossians 3: 12). These are the feelings that the Holy Spirit would produce in a believer's heart in relation to his fellow men.

In chapter 14 the hearts of the disciples were troubled and this is what led the Lord to say: "Let not your heart be troubled" (verse 1) and He makes them a number of promises.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a promise. The Lord said, "I send the promise of my Father upon you" (Luke 24: 49). That relates to the gift of the Spirit but He makes a number of other promises in this chapter. He tells the disciples: "I go to prepare you a place; and if I go...I am coming again and shall receive you to myself" (verse 3). That is one promise. Later on He says that they would do greater works than He would do (verse 12). That is another promise. I do not think they did anything greater in the sense of individual acts but it was certainly so in the magnitude of the blessing. Through a single preaching at Pentecost about three thousand souls were saved! Then Peter opened the door to the Gentiles and they were brought into blessing. Then we have another promise as to answered prayer. " whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, this will I do, ... If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (verse 13, 14). How reassuring. These are promises to lay hold of.

Then we have this further promise: "And I will beg the Father, and He will give you another Comforter". What a blessed promise that is, "another Comforter". As the Lord Jesus had been with His disciples, cared for them, guided and blessed them so, He tells them, they will have another Comforter. The note in the Darby translation says that if the word 'solicitor' were not too common, it would just answer the sense. If you go to see a solicitor, you tell him your problem and seek his guidance and wisdom. How wonderful it is to have a divine Person to help us in this way, then the Lord says, "that he may be with you for ever".

Then there is the added thought that "he abides with you". He has come here to be with us as a companion even as Jesus accompanied with His disciples. May we have some consciousness day by day of a divine Person abiding with us. "God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Galatians 4: 6). That is His dwelling and He fills our hearts with the love of God, and prompts our hearts to respond to God affectionately, crying, "Abba Father" (Romans 8: 15). What a wonderful service!

It goes on to say that "The Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you" (verse 26). When I was younger I often heard the exhortation to read the scriptures and to get the word into our minds because, even if we do not immediately remember it, the Holy Spirit can bring it to our remembrance.

Then in chapter 16 Jesus says, "it is profitable for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you". It is a remarkable statement that it is profitable that the Lord Jesus went away. Surely we would have thought it was more profitable for the Lord to stay, but no, "For if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you". So we are brought to the double blessing that we have in this dispensation—a Saviour on high who is our high priest and our advocate with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, a divine Person here on earth as our Comforter and guide.

John adds that the Holy Spirit "shall guide you into all the truth". How important the guidance of the Holy Spirit is. I watch the guides going around our old city back home. They do not talk about everything; they stop at places of particular interest and tell the visitors all about it. So we need to prove, especially in our Bible readings, the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit to bring to us not just every verse of the chapter read but what is to be of particular help and interest to us. The Lord says "He shall not speak from himself;... he will announce to you what is coming ... he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you". The Holy Spirit is our link with heaven to bring to us living communications from the very presence of the Father and the Son, that we might be encouraged and that Christ might be glorified—"he shall glorify me".

That is the test of any service: does it glorify Christ? The Holy Spirit has not come to glorify Himself. There are places today where everything is made of the Holy Spirit but the test as to whether the Holy Spirit truly has His place is

whether the Lord Jesus is glorified. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall announce it to you".

I finish now with the word from Revelation. There are a number of references to the Holy Spirit in the book. John says, "I became in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Revelation 1: 10) and he stresses the need to hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

When we come to chapter 22 we have reference to the great commission of the Holy Spirit. Firstly, the Lord speaks personally "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star". The day of the return of our Saviour is near, the day when He will be glorified here on earth, where His rights have been rejected. He says, "I am the bright and morning star".

Then we read: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come". This is the Spirit's great commission, to secure the bride for Christ! This is His present service, to awaken our hearts to the coming of the Bridegroom. "Behold, the bridegroom; go forth to meet him" (Matthew 5: 6). This is the urge of the Holy Spirit now that we might be ready for a heavenly bridegroom. The church of course is not equal to Godhead, although in a very privileged position and relationship with the Lord Jesus, but it is still a creature vessel composed of all who have come under the shelter of the blood of Jesus.

As conscious of the inward working of the Holy Spirit we can say "Come" in unison with Him. Then it says, "And let him that hears say, Come". If we are not yet in the cry we may be encouraged as hearing it from others, and we can encourage each other as to the coming of the Lord and as to the urge of the Holy Spirit that we might be one with Him in saying "Come, Lord Jesus".

"And let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take the water of life freely." The door is not closed yet! How marvellous divine grace is. "He that will, let him take the water of life freely". And John says, "Yea,...Amen; come, Lord Jesus".

I trust the Lord might bless these few thoughts to us and that we may as a result of our times together today have a greater sense of God's glorious name as revealed to us in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, for His name's sake.

Brian Parr

Address at Hampton, 2nd November 1996

A PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

Genesis 22 : 1-14

1 John 4 : 10-

John 1 : 14

It always amazes me when I think of the way in which God has moved towards me because of His heart of love. I did not deserve anything. Yet it says in Romans that when we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly. Initially we are not aware of the fact that we are sinners and need a Saviour. Maybe you are still not aware of the fact; I do not know. It is a great mercy from God when He makes us aware of the fact that we need a Saviour, that we are sinners, quite unsuited for His presence.

It is one of the aspects of God's mercy that He addresses Himself to us by various means including our circumstances. I remember a believer once who said that God nearly had to kill him before he would give in. Saul of Tarsus also went through a severe experience. I think he must have been disturbed inwardly for quite a while before his conversion. He had witnessed how Stephen died and no doubt how other christians had suffered and died. Then he was on his way to Damascus with written authority from the high priest to apprehend persons who were followers of J sus. God in the richness of His mercy reached out and stopped him in his tracks. Have you ever been stopped like that? There was something you intended to do, somewhere you intended to go, and you were stopped. Just think about it; God is rich in mercy. He sometimes intervenes in our histories in such a way as to stop us doing things that would have been to our eternal damage.

In the Old Testament we are told how God stopped Balaam. Balaam was riding on an ass, on a commission from a wicked king, and God stopped him. Balaam did not know but there was an angel with a drawn sword standing in his path; the ass could see it but he could not, such was his the blindness, wilfulness and determination to go his own way.

I do not want to dwell on this too negatively but I think it is a matter of experience that we can look back and say, 'Yes, God stopped me there, not to destroy me but to save me, to bless me'. God stopped Balaam but he never got the blessing; it is, I think, one of the saddest incidents recorded for us. That man came face to face with the mercy of God—the ass he was riding on actually crushed his foot against the wall and when Balaam smote the ass God gave the

ass a human voice. It tells us later in the scripture that the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the folly of the prophet. Balaam realised that he was at a distance from God and that distance would never be overcome. He had to say: "I shall behold him but not nigh; I shall see him but not near". That is recorded for us by way of instruction, so that we might take heed and might never have to say ourselves: "I shall see him but not nigh". God intervenes in our lives in love; the time for judgment will come but at the moment His interventions in human lives are in love.

Let me show you God's greatest intervention of all, which was in the cross of Christ. That is where God intervened in the history of man in mercy and in love. If you want to see His love go to Calvary. That is why I read in Genesis chapter 22; the incident that is recorded there is to speak to us of Jesus and His sacrifice. Abraham held Isaac in a very special way. When it says, "thine only son, whom thou lovest", it is the first reference to love in the Bible. God was testing Abraham but that is only one aspect of the incident; the other is that it brings out the affection, the interchange of thought between Abraham and Isaac as they went on that journey together. It is to speak to our hearts of the way that Jesus when here on earth always did the Father's will. Then, Isaac says, "My father!". Abraham immediately replies, "Here am I". Isaac says, 'Here is all the equipment but where is the offering?' Well, where is it? If you come over to the gospels you will see where it is; you will see it in Jesus.

There is a ram caught in the thicket by its horns; it speaks of the power and the strength of divine love that took Jesus to Calvary's cross. Well might you and I ask ourselves 'Why?' It was love that took Jesus there; it was love that held Him there; it was love that took Him all the way to death itself. I find that when you come to this point in speaking of these things you come to the point when you get out of your depth; that river of love is so great, so powerful that you find that there is little you can say about it.

I was speaking with a christian this morning about Ezekiel's river; someone turning towards God measures things first of all by his own measurements. If you think of the son in Luke 15 he was measuring his need by the servants' standards in his father's house. That was his assessment of where he was; he says, 'Why should I perish here when even the servants in my father's house have better than I have? Let me just go back and ask him. Perhaps he will let me come home again'. I can imagine how he thought. Now of Ezekiel's river it says there was water to the ankles; if you follow that through it gets to the point where

there is water to swim in and a water that could not be passed over. That speaks to me of the love and the grace of God in which I am lost because it is so immense. Initially I might measure it by how I see it and find how small it is but eventually you find as you come to know the blessed God how great and majestic and powerful His love is and that you are lost in it. Do you know and experience that love?

So to go back to Genesis we find that although God was testing Abraham it illustrates the words of the New Testament, "He who, yea, has spared not his own Son". Think of what it cost the blessed God that you and I might be set free. He had to give His only Son. The hymn expresses it:-

*'But none of the ransomed ever knew,
How great were the waters crossed,
Or how dark was the night the Lord went through,
Ere he found the sheep that was lost'.*

Think of the distance that came in because of sin, a distance that is measureless to you and me; it was measured by the Saviour. He bore and exhausted God's judgment. The judgment fell on Jesus but He exhausted the judgment so that you and I might go free. All the sins we have done, all the evil things we have thought, all those unkind things we have said, all those things which are an affront to a holy God can all be met because of the sacrifice of Jesus. God can therefore move towards us in love.

Earlier I was thinking of the negative side. God is love but the opposite of that is hate. God hates the sin but loves the sinner. That is a great thing; God does not like what you do or think or say on many occasions but He loves us. I have sometimes said to people with whom I work when they have done something they should not, 'I am not against you personally but I do not like what you have done.' It is an important distinction to make and it is the way God is. He is not against us personally but He does not like what we do. Everything we have done and said that is distasteful to Him, that awful load of sin we have built up, that awful debt, was discharged by Jesus, so that you and I might by trusting in His finished work be free.

In the epistle to the Romans it asks, "Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?" Someone may say, 'Well, if that is the case I can carry on doing what I want to do and God will just forgive me'. But the epistle goes on, "Far be the thought". When we see what it has cost the Saviour that we might be forgiven it

causes us to hate sin. The greatest lever in the soul to seek to be pleasing to Him is to know what it cost Him to deal with all those unpleasing things, those unsuitable things, things that are not fitting for a christian.

"Herein is love," it says in John, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us." God has displayed His love in Jesus in giving Him to die for our sins on Calvary's cross. Having been loved, not only should we love God but there should be something that flows out characteristically; one that has been loved is one that loves. That is only a little word of exhortation. I feel the edge of that word as much as any. We find day by day that there are things that mark us that are so unlovable; that casts us back on that infinite love of God that has met every need, every requirement, and discharged every debt.

The prodigal son in Luke 15 was considering what to do, having been brought low by the famine; he looked at what the pigs were eating and he would have eaten even that in his need but no man gave to him. That is the way that God can reach into a person's heart and bring them down and cause them to turn, can get them just to take stock of where they are and find their need to be pretty desperate. If you have not got Jesus you are in a pretty desperate way. The prodigal says, "I have sinned against heaven". That is a good thing to come to. David when speaking of his sin with Bathsheba recognises that it is really against God that he has sinned. He says in Psalm 51, "against thee, thee only, have I sinned". You say, 'What about the woman?' Well, God knows about that; He knows all about it, but the essential thing to come to is that sin in its essence is against God, because God is holy and just and righteous. His issue with us is because of our sins, but God is rich in mercy towards the sinner.

So the hymn writer says: 'O surrender now'. I do not know whether you feel like doing that, just giving in to the claims of such wondrous love. Surrender to it, allow the cleansing power of the blood of Christ to wash over your soul. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt on the night of the Passover God said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you". Oh just simply recognise what God says about you and about me, that all have sinned and come short; just recognise that. Prove it to yourself by experience; look back over maybe the last few hours of your life—do you not find there something that is not quite as it should be? Jacob, when he was fleeing from his parents' house because of having double-crossed his brother lay down to sleep; he did not have a very good night; he was sleeping on a stone for a pillow. He had a dream and God was speaking to him in that dream; there were angels ascending and descending on a ladder; there

was communication. He was not very comfortable and he said, 'This is a dreadful place. This is the gate of heaven.' Anyone with sin upon them is uncomfortable in the presence of a holy God. But you need not be uncomfortable because Jesus has borne every sin; every thing that is unsuitable to the presence of God has been met in the sacrifice of Jesus. That is the gospel. What God has done He has done for Himself and He would bring you into the benefit of it tonight through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was in the divine mind that God would resolve the whole issue of sin in the blood of His own. What a Saviour Jesus is! I commend Him to you. If you do not know Him, surrender and prove what it is to be free in your spirit, so that there is not a cloud above and not a spot within. May it be the portion of all for His Name's sake.

Ken Melville

A preaching of the gospel, January 1997, at Defford.

CHRIST OUR HOPE

1 Thessalonians 4 : 13 - 18

In these verses Paul is writing to the Thessalonians because he did not want them to be ignorant about those who had fallen asleep in Jesus, "to the end that ye be not grieved even as also the rest who have no hope". It is a wonderful thing to have our hope in Jesus; indeed the Bible tells us that He is our hope, the hope of everyone who has put their trust in Him.

Paul knew that the Thessalonians were lacking in understanding about the resurrection and he did not want them to remain like that so he wrote to them that they might have a real hope in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a wonderful thing for each of us to put our trust in the Lord Jesus and have Him as our hope, to know that He is coming again and that all who have trusted in Him will be caught up

to be with Him. Our brother had that hope; it was very evident in his face. I was struck by the happy disposition he had; it was because he had his hope in Christ. It is a great thing, even though there may be times of suffering and sadness, to have a hope centred in Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus comes to call His own He is going to descend. He has descended once already; He came to the earth to give Himself, a ransom for all. He is coming again; it does not say He will come to the earth but it says He will descend to take all those who have put their trust in Him to be with Him. That is the wonderful hope of the believer. That is what is before us, not the problems that beset a world ravaged by sin, but our hope in the One who bore our sins, the One who Himself knew not sin but bore our sins in His body on the tree. Well may we all rejoice in Him who is our hope and seek to be here waiting His coming, for He will come. Scripture tells us that in this well known passage; He is coming for all who believe. I trust we are all among those that believe in Jesus and have this certain hope.

When the Lord comes for His own He will raise the dead first and then we, the living, will all be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, to meet the One who saved us and is our hope. May we be walking here as those who know our Lord Jesus Christ as our hope.

For those who believe, the Lord Jesus has taken away the sting of death. Any one of us may have to meet death before Jesus comes, but it is wonderful to know that the sting has been taken away. Our brother knew that; the sting of death is taken away for the christian, because of the work that Jesus has done for us individually in suffering at Calvary. We come into this blessing one by one, through faith in Jesus, through faith in His blood.

May we all find this hope in Christ, and may this hope be renewed in the hearts of those who know Him already. Even in this time of sorrow may our hearts be comforted as knowing what it is to have hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leonard Gidlow

Word at a burial at Hawkinge, April 1997.

FAITHFUL LOVE

WHAT wondrous love, O Lord, led Thee to go
From glory's heights, to suffer shame and loss,
And here to drink the bitter cup of woe
On Calv'ry's cross

No love, blest Lord, can with thy love compare,
Love faithful till Thou yieldest Thy life's breath,
God's holy judgment Thou Thyself did'st bear,
And vanquish death.

Twas love to God, and love unto Thine own,
Those that the Father gave, Lord, unto Thee,
Which led Thee there, and Thou for them hast won
Great victory.

Thou lov'dst us unto death, Thyself did'st give,
And us, the guilty, from God's sight remove,
That we in Thee, the risen One, might live
In holy love.

Victorious Lord, we see Thee on God's throne,
We hail Thee there, all worthy, with delight,
And soon wilt Thou present us as Thine own
In Thy blest sight.

In priestly grace Thou dost our hearts sustain,
As we press home to Thee on life's highways,
Singing to Thee, our everlasting gain,
In joyful lays.

O wondrous moment when the heavens ring
With Thy blest voice, calling Thine own above!
Then shall our hearts with joy before Thee sing
In endless love.

Within the Father's home, there all is love
And cloudless light, where He forever dwells;
All in that blessed scene of joy above
Thy glory tells.

E H Chater (1845 - 1915)

CHRIST IS ALL

CHRIST is all, and none compareth,
Chiefest of ten thousand, He;
Christ who bore sin's judgment, suffered
Once for all on Calv'ry's tree.

Christ is all, oh! sing His praises!
Sing the praise of Him who died!
Join with loudest acclamation,
To extol "the crucified"!

Christ is all, the risen Saviour,
Now triumphant from the grave;
Death and hell are vanquished by Him,
Christ, omnipotent to save.

Christ is all, and now in glory,
Crowned and seated on the throne,
Theme of every saved one's story,
All the praise is His alone.

Christ is all; oh! peerless Saviour!
Who would not Thy love declare,
Tell of Thee to all around us,
That Thy glory they might share?

Christ is all, and soon He cometh,
Cometh quickly for His own;
All the cleansed by blood He claimeth,
Then to know as we are known.

Christ is all; then what else needeth
He who knows the Lord above?
Christ alone the heart's void filleth,
Christ the Son of God's own love.

Christ is all; oh! name most precious!
Name as ointment poured forth!
Name beyond our highest praises!
Who can tell His priceless worth.

E H Chater (1845 - 1915)

THE TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO HEAVEN

(From a message handed out recently on the London Underground)

ACCOMMODATION: Arrangements for first class accommodation have been made in advance. "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14: 2)

DEPARTURE TIMES: The exact date of departure has not been announced. Travellers are advised to be prepared to depart at short notice. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." (Acts 1: 7)

TICKETS: Your ticket is a written pledge that guarantees your journey. It should be claimed and its promises kept firmly in hand. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24)

CUSTOMS: Only one declaration applies. "I declare unto you the gospel... that Christ died for our sins... and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day." (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4)

IMMIGRATION: All passengers are classified as immigrants, since they are taking up permanent residence in a new country. The quota is unlimited. "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly...for he hath prepared for them a city." (Hebrews 11: 16)

LUGGAGE: No luggage whatsoever can be taken. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (1 Timothy 6: 7)

AIR PASSAGE: All travellers will go directly by air and are advised to watch daily for imminent departure. "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4: 17)

VACCINATION AND INOCULATION: Injections are not needed as diseases are unknown at the destination. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Revelation 21: 4)

CURRENCY: Supplies of currency may be forwarded ahead to await passengers' arrival. Deposits should be as large as possible. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matthew 6: 20)

CLOTHING: A complete and appropriate new wardrobe is provided for each traveller. "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61: 10)

TIME CHANGES: Resetting of watches will not be necessary, nor will watches. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There shall be no night there." (Revelation 21: 23-25)

RESERVATIONS: Booking is now open. Apply at once. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6: 2)

ARRIVAL CEREMONY: On arrival a welcoming reception and coronation await each one. "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Timothy 4: 8)

A WORD OF WARNING— 3

THE DANGER OF LEGALITY

Galatians 5 : 1

: 13-15

: 25-26

6 : 1

Legality relates to the controlling and regulation of the flesh, and we readily fall a prey to it. The epistle to the Galatians is written to a group of gatherings in Galatia, and this would indicate that there are certain areas that are more prone than others to legality. It is described in Acts 15, when the matter of circumcising the gentiles was up for discussion. Peter standing up says, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?" That is how legality works; binding matters are laid upon others. You hardly ever find a legal person hard upon himself, for persons who are legal in their outlook are usually very tolerant with themselves.

If a yoke is put on the neck of the disciples it brings in the spirit of bondage. The apostle in writing to the Galatians says, "I am afraid of you" (4: 11) and truly we can speak like that when the spirit of legality gets a hold in a locality. It displaces the Spirit of God. If we have been taken up and brought into the liberty that the Galatian epistle speaks about, then the word to us is, "Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage". He says further, "for ye have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not turn liberty into an opportunity to the flesh".

Persons who have a legal outlook will always tell you that, when you do away with regulation on the principle of law, what comes in is looseness. That just challenges the presence and power of the Spirit; the presence of the Spirit rightly understood does not for a moment allow any opening for looseness. It is therefore a question of how we are held in subjection, either by legality, or by subjection to Christ in glory and to the Spirit here on earth. The teaching of Romans 8 shows us the power of the Spirit. It compares the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, and shows the way in which the Spirit can be relied upon to bring in all the power necessary to hold every one of us in perfect liberty in the gain of sonship. So we do not need to bring in legality. It simply brings in an element of

bondage, that in itself is unjust and cruel, because it was the element among the Jews that crucified Jesus.

They were fully exposed through their legal criticism when He went through the cornfields on the sabbath day. How did He meet this spirit in them? He challenged them that if they had known "what is: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless". God is not pleased with the condemning spirit sometimes found amongst believers. He is looking for a living, happy responsive people as the result of His own operations in bringing us into liberty.

The apostle brings forward over against legality the liberty of sonship. We have been brought into the wonderful position of sonship. We have liberty with God and with one another. That works out to great advantage in our localities. So in chapter 6 he says, "Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted".

It is no good going to see a person who has been taken in a fault if, in self-righteousness, I have the feeling in my heart that I would never do such a thing myself. Scripture says, "let him that thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10: 12); so, if we are concerned with restoring a person, it is not in any legal or exacting spirit but as "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted". The spirit of legality is replaced by the buoyant substantiality of liberty in sonship. We bring in power and liberation. There is no suggestion of one or two spiritual persons forgiving the erring one. It is a question of restoring such a one, but it must be in the spirit of meekness.

As we come into the presence of the Father, the blessedness of divine compassion towards us causes our hearts to overflow towards one another so that, if there is the slightest degree of repentance with any erring one, we do not self-righteously avoid them, but in priestly grace we seek to deepen the exercise with them so that full repentance may be brought in and the person may be restored. Scripture says, "He that brings back a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death"—how delightful that is to God!

A.P.C. Lawrence

This is the third extract from an address at Coatbridge in 1958.

EXTRACTS FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDWARD DENNETT

We are told that Solomon was seven years building the temple and thirteen years building his own house. I cannot doubt therefore that we are intended to learn that the mind of Solomon was more set upon his own house than upon the house of God. We have the same lesson taught to us in Haggai 1. And it is a needed lesson, as we all know. See what money christians will spend upon the adornments of their own houses compared with what they give for the things of God.

Worldliness in some shape or form finds an easy entrance amongst the children of God. We have need, therefore, to be always on the watch, and to remember that the love of the world absolutely excludes from the heart the love of the Father.

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God”. He would have us in the intimacy of His love, to be without reserve before Him...Our danger never lies in telling Him too much, but just in the opposite direction...He loves to hear the cry of His children, for He well knows that it is the expression of their confidence in Him. It may be, as it often is, a foolish cry, but it is still the cry of His own children, and He never wearies of listening to it.

It must ever be remembered that guidance is a matter of faith, not sight.

An open door in service is from the Lord and not from man. We may, therefore, be independent of man altogether, and we shall be if we keep our eyes wholly

upon the Lord, remembering He always sets an open door before us if we keep His word and do not deny His name. (See Revelation 3: 8).

I have often thought that the ideal way of speaking would be to be so conscious of the Lord's presence as to have no eyes for the saints who are present. Indeed, this should always be the case, and then one would only seek to commend oneself to the Lord. Alas! how seldom this is the case. And yet, even in preaching the apostle says, "As from God, and as before God, we speak in Christ". This would be the perfection of speaking.

Simeon "blessed God" (Luke 2: 28). "And Simeon blessed them" (verse 34). When you bless God you will be able to bless other people, for all service must be carried on in the spirit of worship. No service is effective that is not the overflowing of the heart.

Whether for walk, conflict, testimony, or worship, our only and all-sufficient power is the Holy Ghost.

When people become slaves to a fad they soon become tyrants.

When knowledge enters the head it exalts me. When knowledge enters the heart it humbles me.

All error has a particle of truth about it, and that is why it is so dangerous.

“Wisdom and might are his” (Daniel 2: 20). A simple utterance, but how profound! For if wisdom and might are God’s, they are nowhere else to be found, and it is vain to turn for them to any but God.

Wherever there is a claim to great spirituality there is a danger.

Nothing so injures a soul as controversy.

In this day of grace God would have all men to be saved, and hence we have to beseech (2 Corinthians 5: 20) —not denounce—all men. You cannot feed souls with denunciations—even though the things denounced are errors.

There are only two channels of testimony—the lip and the life, and the lip should be but the expression of what has first been produced in the life. What we should all desire is intense reality, to be possessed and controlled by the truth we profess to hold, and thus to shun the use of phrases and sentences which we have never eaten, digested and found true in our souls.

Nothing justifies us in hardness of spirit. We have to be faithful to God and tender to the one who erred.

Whenever there is a work of grace in souls they are drawn together in the bonds of divine love.

“The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul.” The root of all discords in the church of God is the lack of the Spirit’s power; where He works unhindered in any company of saints...there must be unity...The lack of enjoyed unity in any company is due to the absence of the power of the Holy Spirit.

We may always trust the tenderness of the Lord, and fail as we may we may trust Him.

The Spirit brought home to me the other morning an old scripture with great power. It was only this: “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus” (John 11). In this very chapter Martha does nothing save to blunder, and exhibit her blindness to the glory of the Person of her Lord, and yet the chapter is prefaced by the statement that Jesus loved her. It touched me deeply as I saw a little of the significance of the statement, and it taught me that the Lord’s love to us rises above our failures, and that, therefore, we may count upon it and rest in it at all times.

Faith deals with things not seen, and hence seldom agrees with the conclusions that are drawn from providential events and circumstances.

It is comparatively easy... to engage in the service of God when He intervenes in power to sustain His servants and to secure results, but it is only the man of faith who can labour on amid discouragements of every kind, who can trust a power not seen to uphold and prosper, and is assured that the Spirit, who is invisible in His working to the natural eye, is even more mighty than manifested power. There are many Elijahs indeed who prefer the strong winds and the earthquakes to the all-efficacious still small voice of the Spirit of God.

The preacher has to learn that liberty is not power. The temptation is to rest satisfied in speaking with ease and freedom. Whenever this is the case it is Satan's opportunity, and thus we ought to be on our guard.

"Be ye angry and sin not". Righteous anger is communion with God in His indignation against evil, but even if anger produced in us by the Holy Ghost be nursed, it will soon pass into natural feeling, and thus we are told, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." And then the injunction follows, "Neither give place to the devil". To cherish a feeling against anyone is to give place to the devil.

"Pray for them that despitefully use you" (Luke 6: 28). If a brother treats you coldly, if a sister speaks against you, do you make it your habit to pray for them? Oh, how different we would be, if we thus bear one another up before the Lord.

"... speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means." (1 Corinthians 2:13)

THE PIOUS MAN

Psalm 16 : 5-11

Isaiah 50 : 4-7

1 Timothy 4 : 7-8

1 Timothy 6 : 6-11

These scriptures have been selected in order to speak of the pious man; primarily I have in mind the Lord Jesus. God's desire is that we should take character from Him. Psalm 4: 3 says "...Jehovah hath set apart the pious man for himself". He is a peculiar treasure; how true that was of the Lord Jesus. Whilst God is forming men in sonship in Christ's image, Christ is distinguished above all as being anointed with the oil of gladness above His companions. He must have the first place in all things.

God had peculiar delight in the unquestioning devotion of the pious man. Psalm 16 refers in a special way to the Lord Jesus. When anointed for public service at the Jordan, following a mostly hidden life, He is distinguished by the descent of the Spirit as a dove and a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I have found my delight". There was nothing in the hidden life of Jesus that needed to be judged. God was with Him in all the circumstances of life. The pious man is looking to God in all his circumstances; both in word and deed he is looking to the One to whom he belongs. Piety is the opposite to independancy and self will. Psalm 16: 5 reads "Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup". The cup refers to joy. The Lord's joy was in His links with His Father. Pleasing the Father gave Him joy; everything He said and did, everywhere He went, was according to the Father's will and pleasure.

As to ourselves we need to remember that we belong, spirit, soul and body, to God on the basis of redemption and that the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. The Lord's promise to the believer as stated to the woman by the well is, "... the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life" (John 4: 14). If your life is one of self pleasing and worldly pursuits it is questionable whether you really know anything about eternal life. Our joy can be full as doing the will of the Master; indeed Psalm 23: 5 says "... my cup runneth over". The basis of it is piety.

Then it says “the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places”. The lines refer to the allotment of the inheritance; the Lord was satisfied with the souls that the Father drew to Him when He was here in service. In the book of Joshua the territory was divided amongst the tribes in an intertwined way to develop the feature of brotherliness; indeed Judah said to Simeon his brother, “Come up with me into my lot...” (Judges 1: 3). The inheritance in our day would connect with the company we keep; we should find our life in the company of those who belong to God. The Lord was ever separate yet always available to those in need, to lepers and to outcasts but the Lord’s goodly heritage was in those who were attached to Him. The women in Luke 8, including Mary Magdalene, who ministered to Him of their substance, would be included in this. The Lord loved them and they loved Him. I trust everyone in this room loves Him; as we sometimes sing:--

*‘And we love Thee, blest Lord,
E’en now, though feeble here;’*

They persevered with Him as He went through all quarters doing good. Indeed, He says to some “But ye are they who have persevered with me in my temptations” (Luke 22: 28). We need to persevere as they did.

In the passage read in Isaiah 50, the Lord knew what it was to be wakened morning by morning by the Father with instructions for the day, “that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary”. The Lord said, “I must work the works of him that has sent me while it is day” (John 9: 4). How much the Lord had to do; what need there was, what service to render, what burdens to bear. Jesus served unstintingly. Those who came to the Lord were given some impression of God. The leper who returned to the Lord following his cleansing gave glory to God (Luke 17: 15). God had come in in Christ to reconcile the world to Himself. In all things the Lord had Jehovah continually before Him; God was His objective.

Could I ask you what is your objective? Someone may say, ‘I am a young man still at college hoping subsequently to get a good job’. The Lord passed through every stage of humanity and, as the pious Man, always had God as His objective. For ourselves, whatever we do, even our studies for the menial tasks in life here,

can be taken up as doing it to the Lord. He will even help you with your homework.

Coming now to the close of the life, the brief life, of the pious Man, He was born to die. Matthew 1: 21 says, "for he shall save his people from their sins", which looks on to His death and indeed to His resurrection. The Psalm continues "for thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol, neither wilt thou allow thy Holy One to see corruption". Even as facing death He said "not my will, but thine be done". He faced death as doing the Father's will. God intends to people His kingdom with persons taking character from Christ, with persons who do the will of God unswervingly. Jesus went into death as bearing the burden of your sins and mine, coming out of death in triumph and glory. "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life: thy countenance is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Well, that is the pious Man as seen in the Lord Jesus. Now God's intention is that we should become like Christ as following in His steps. That is the reason I read from 1 Timothy, an epistle which speaks much of piety and our looking to God in the circumstances of life here.

1 Timothy 3: 16 speaks of the mystery of piety; that is another clear reference to Jesus who humbled Himself, taking a bondman's form, born in humble circumstances and in life here without 'means'. He had no horse or ass to ride on; at the conclusion of His service in fulfilment of Zechariah 9: 9 it was on a borrowed beast that He went into Jerusalem. He was so great yet, as someone wrote:-

*Thou wast the image, Lord, in lowly guise,
Of the Invisible to mortal eyes;
Son of His bosom, come from heav'n above,
We see in Thee incarnate, "God is love."*

The mystery of piety was seen in Jesus, One so great, yet meek and lowly in heart, but able to enter into death and break its power. The upholder of all things was here in Manhood in absolute perfection, obedient unto death and then He was received up in glory, not into glory. He, rejected by the hierarchy of Jerusalem, entered into heaven triumphant, in might and splendour with all the heavenly hosts to acclaim Him, Man in heaven in victory! Jesus has gone into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us. He is there as our representative; God intends to people heaven with men like Jesus.

Piety as seen in the believer is evidenced in those who are taking character from Him now. 1 Timothy 4 speaks of exercise; bodily exercise is profitable for a little but piety is profitable for everything, including life here and that to come. Pious souls become content with their circumstances, making way for God to undertake for them in life here, waiting on Him to make plain their path.

Finally, in 1 Timothy 6 it says "piety with contentment is great gain". A pious person is not set on making money; he would have to leave it all behind anyway. I know 1 Timothy 6: 17 speaks of "those rich in the present age" but there they are exhorted not to trust in the uncertainty of riches but in God and to be rich in good works. I heard tell of a very rich man speaking of his wealth to a companion and saying: 'all these millions and not a moment of happiness'. No, riches do not furnish happiness. The pious person can be happy and contented here with very little materially. Then the scripture adds, "but those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many unwise and hurtful lusts, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is the root of every evil.....". It is a warning to us all not to stray away from the path of the pious.

May the Lord bless to us these few words of exhortation for His name's sake.

F. D. Waterfall

Address at Hampton 8th December, 1979

FATHER, Thine everlasting grace
Our scanty thought surpasses far,
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
Thine arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste and live.

Rothe, tr. J. Wesley