

# *Living Water*

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## PETER'S VIEW OF THE RAPTURE

“For we have not made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, following cleverly imagined fables, but having been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight; and this voice we heard uttered from heaven, being with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word made surer, to which ye do well taking heed (as to a lamp shining in an obscure place) until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts.” 2 Peter 1:16-19

I would like to convey an impression of the glory of what is before the Lord's people in relation to the 'rapture'. I trust that we all understand what the thought of the 'rapture' is. Many truths are laid out for us in considerable detail in Scripture and although there is very little direct teaching about the 'rapture', we would look to the Lord that He might give us a living touch about it at this time. The word 'rapture' in this context means the act of transporting a person from one sphere of existence to another.

The rapture has been referred to as 'the next great event', but I prefer to speak about it as involving the Person of the Lord Jesus because the rapture is all about a living, glorious Man. That the rapture is more than merely an event is shown from the scripture: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Revelation 22:17). The Spirit and the bride would not say "Come" to an event; they are speaking to a Person, to the Lord Jesus.

By the time Peter wrote his epistles he was an older man and what he has to convey is a great help to us in our day. Peter had the wonderful privilege of being with the Lord during His ministry here on earth. He is a brother who has matured, one who made mistakes, yes, but those mistakes are recorded in scripture for our instruction. I trust we have all been helped by the record of Peter's mistakes.

As he is about to leave the scene of responsibility Peter is engaging the Lord's people with the Person of Christ. I think it is a great thing to see in older believers the ability to speak with affection and appreciation of the Person of Christ. In the passage read Peter is recounting the incident of being with the Lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

He does not draw attention to what he thought or said; he speaks of the glory of the Person who was there on the holy mountain, the Person who engaged their hearts. Peter tells us of "his majesty" and that He received from God the Father, "honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory". It is a wonderful thing to have matured and full impressions of Christ in our old age. It is very blessed when someone is able to draw your heart after the Person and the glory of Christ. Peter was soon to finish his course here and he is speaking about the glorious Person of Christ.

Now I want to draw your attention to what Peter adds. He says: "until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts". That, I think, is Peter's own personal impression of the rapture, "the morning star arise in your hearts". That is, Christ is gaining the ascendancy in the affections of His people; the Morning Star is arising in their hearts. There is something flowing out of the affections of the Lord's people in expectation of His soon coming.

It has been said that the Morning Star is the harbinger of the coming day. We are looking for Christ, expecting Him, welcoming Him.

I expect those who go to sea often think about the Morning Star. The Morning Star comes in all its brilliance, the harbinger of the coming day. The Lord Jesus is coming. The Morning Star is rising in the affections of His people. We are looking to that precious, glorious moment when He comes. May our affections be stimulated today in the anticipation of the coming of that glorious One.

Peter also says: "Whom having not seen, ye love" (1 Peter 1:8). We love Him for what He has done, for who He is and for the place He has in the affections of the Father. Peter draws attention in his epistle to what the Father says of His Son: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight". Is it enough to stir our affections tonight, to stir affections that have perhaps have become dormant?

Peter then adds: "Until the day dawn". We are assured that day is coming and of the glory of the one whose day it is—the day of Jesus Christ, but I believe that something is already stirring in the affections of the Lord's people in relation to the imminence of the rapture and the arising Morning Star.

May our affections be quickened the more as we wait for Him.

*Malcolm Wallach*

*This is the final extract from an address at Portknockie 24<sup>th</sup> May 1997.*

## HOW WE HEAR

**For there is nothing hid which shall not become manifest, nor secret which shall not be known and come to light. Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever has, to him shall be given, and whosoever has not, even what he seems to have shall be taken from him. Luke 8:17-18**

The phrase "take heed how ye hear" is, I believe, the key to the whole of chapter 8 of Luke's gospel.

In Acts 10, Cornelius sent to Joppa for Peter, who came with some other Jews. Cornelius says that they were all present before God "to hear all things that are commanded thee of God". After recording Peter's discourse, scripture says, "while Peter was speaking these words the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were hearing the word"; that is, in listening to what Peter was saying they were listening to what God had to say. The chapter we read in Luke starts with women who had come from Galilee and as a great crowd comes together the Lord Jesus tells them the parable of the sower and at the end of the parable He says that the seed is the word of God.

This passage has often been used in the preaching of the gospel but I want to use it tonight in a way that would bring it home to each one of us, for that is the way to get the gain of scripture. In each of these cases it was the same seed the sower went out to sow. The seed was the word of God, and that is why I referred to Acts 10. The Lord spoke of some of the seed that fell by the side of the road; it never got a chance to grow. I remember being at an address in Scarborough about 30 years ago and at the end of it felt I had got nothing. I enjoyed what was said but did not think there was much substance in the address. A few months later this same address came out in printed form and in reading it over I realised that I had been listening wrongly. I had not been listening for the word of God. It was definitely in what was said but I had not heard it. I think most of us would agree that we have not always been listening rightly. Jesus says, "take heed how ye hear".

Other seed fell upon the rock where it had not much earth and it sprang up quickly. How often this may be the case with us. We hear God speaking and we enjoy it but that is as far as it goes and there is no fruit for God. There is lack of depth of earth and how often I have felt lack of depth with me. The next time there is probably plenty of earth. The seed sprang up but having done so the cares and riches and pleasures of life choked it. Cares and pleasures are completely opposite but Satan uses both to choke the word of God in our hearts and souls that it may not bring forth fruit for the heart of God.

Then there was the seed which fell on the good ground. "These are they", says the Lord, "who in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience". The good ground is that which has been worked on by the Holy Spirit but the fruit may not spring up immediately. It may take quite a while for these things to work out in our souls so as to bear fruit. I believe it requires prayer to find out exactly what God is saying but the result that God would have is that there should be fruit from each one of us.

Luke writes with method; he does not always put incidents in chronological order but he has an order where one incident flows on another. So in the next paragraph in this chapter, Jesus is in a house teaching when His mother and His brethren came and could not get in. Someone told Him, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without wishing to see thee". He answering said, "My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it". Those who hear the word of God and do it are those whom Jesus would own as belonging to Himself. There is plenty to encourage in these things.

Following on in the chapter, the disciples take a boat and as they sail Jesus fell asleep. Here we are not dealing with a single person but with men who had to row together. It is not like the present day when one person goes to the wheelhouse and the rest can go to bed. These persons had to pull together and a sudden squall of wind came down on the lake. It is one thing to row together in a flat calm but very different in a storm but God would have us row together whatever the conditions. As a result of the squall the boat was filled with water and they were in danger so they wake Him saying "Master, we perish". It is a good thing to call on the Lord in times of trouble; rising up He rebuked the wind and the raging of the waters and they ceased and there was a great calm. Jesus then turns to them and says, "where is your faith?" When the word of God comes as light to our souls and we answer to that light it means that faith is in operation. The disciples had faith but it was not being used. On reaching the other side the man possessed of demons comes to light but after Jesus had healed him we find him seated, clothed and sensible at the feet of Jesus. What was he doing? Listening to the word of God and listening rightly.

Well, I leave this thought with us as to how we hear.

*George West*

*Extracted from an address at Peterhead, 1996.*

## THE CHANGLESS LOVE OF GOD

“I have loved you, saith Jehovah; but ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?”

Malachi 1:2

What is upon my heart this evening is just to say a few words if I can about the unchangeable character of the love of God. I think there are many of us here this evening who have known what it is to pass through times that have changed, and who are very much aware that we are in a world that is changing, where the conditions of five, ten, twenty years ago are very different to the conditions today, and the circumstances of the testimony are very different from what they were twenty years ago.

What we each one of us need is an anchor for our souls through the knowledge that there is something that has not changed and never will change and that is the precious love of God for the believer today. Whilst we may pass through circumstances that may test our trust in that love, I seek with the Spirit's help tonight to confirm us and re-establish us in the knowledge that God's love for our souls never changes. God's love for the believer must continue because of who God is.

Of course, this is a subject that, whether we are asked to give an address or to preach the gospel, it is still the same God and the same love from the same heart that is towards believer and unbeliever. The wonderful evidence of the continuance of God's love towards humanity is the outgoing of the gospel. God's message of love continues as a testimony in itself to the wonder of a love that never changes. God's heart towards the sinner is the same as when Jesus died on Calvary.

I read from Malachi because it is a book that is often remembered for those who used to speak oft-times to one another, who were walking in simplicity, in devotion and in committal to the will of God. Yet they were going on in the midst of conditions that were far from right, for many were casting doubts upon the reassurance that God gives them of His love for them; they say, “Wherein hast Thou loved us?”. Then again in chapter three, “Your words have been stout against me, saith Jehovah; but ye say, What have we been speaking against Thee?” They were self-righteous people; may we be preserved from such a spirit.

How God felt those conditions: and He remonstrates with them, but before He does so He says, “I have loved you”. It is as though God takes account of every circumstance; He sees all the things that grieve Him in the testimony; He sees the weakness, the fragmentation, the smallness of those that were gathered together but despite it all He comes out in the magnanimity of who He is and says,

"I have loved you". That love never changes. I love to take account of it because it is a reassurance to my soul that no matter how distant I may become, no matter how shallow I may be, the love of God for my soul remains. "I have loved you, saith Jehovah". Despite all the things that Malachi had to say to these people these are the words with which he starts the prophecy.

You may look back over the years of testimony, and look back with sorrow, yet God's love is still towards you. Lay hold of that as an anchor for your soul. In the midst of what changes and crumbles there is something that never will.

*Keith Wickens*

*Extracted from an address at Wolverhampton, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1996.*

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## JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING

1. Sometimes a light surprises  
The christian when he sings;  
It is the Lord who rises  
With healing in His wings:  
When comforts are declining,  
He grants the soul again  
A season of clear shining  
To cheer it after rain.
2. In holy contemplation,  
We sweetly then pursue  
The theme of God's salvation  
And find it ever new:  
Set free from present sorrow,  
We cheerfully can say,  
E'en let the unknown tomorrow  
Bring with it what it may.
3. It can bring with it nothing  
But He will bear us through;  
Who gives the lilies clothing  
Will clothe His people too;  
Beneath the spreading heavens,  
No creature but is fed;  
And He who feeds the ravens,  
Will give His children bread.
4. Though vine nor fig tree either  
Their wonted fruit should bear,  
Though all the fields should wither,  
Nor flocks, nor herds, be there:  
Yet God the Same, abiding,  
His praise shall tune my voice;  
For while in Him confiding,  
I cannot but rejoice.

*William Cowper (1731 - 1800)*



## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

My God, how perfect are Thy ways!  
But mine polluted are;  
Sin twines itself about my praise,  
And slides into my prayer.

When I would speak what Thou hast done  
To save me from my sin,  
I cannot make Thy mercies known  
But self-applause creeps in.

Divine desire, that holy flame  
Thy grace creates in me;  
Alas! impatience is its name,  
When it returns to Thee.

This heart, a fountain of vile thought,  
How does it overflow?  
While self upon the surface floats  
Still bubbling from below.

Let others in the gaudy dress  
Of fancied merit shine;  
The Lord shall be my righteousness  
The Lord for ever mine.

*William Cowper (1731 - 1800)*

## THE GOOD PHYSICIAN

1. How lost was my condition  
Till Jesus made me whole!  
There is but one Physician  
Can cure a sin-sick soul.  
Next door to death He found me,  
And snatched me from the grave,  
To tell to all around me,  
His wondrous power to save.
  2. The worst of all diseases  
Is light compared with sin;  
On every part it seizes,  
But rages most within:  
'Tis palsy, plague, and fever,  
And madness—all combined;  
And none but a believer  
The least relief can find.
- 
3. From men great skill professing  
I thought a cure to gain;  
But this proved more distressing,  
And added to my pain:  
Some said that nothing ailed me,  
Some gave me up for lost;  
Thus every refuge failed me,  
And all my hopes were crossed.
  4. At length this great Physician—  
How matchless is His grace!—  
Accepted my petition,  
And undertook my case:  
First gave me sight to view Him,  
For sin my eyes had sealed,  
Then bid me look unto Him.  
I looked, and I was healed.
- 

5. A risen, ascended Jesus,  
Seen by the eye of faith,  
At once from danger frees us,  
And saves the soul from death:  
Come then to this Physician,  
His help He'll freely give;  
He makes no hard condition;  
'Tis only—Look and live.

*John Newton (1725 - 1807)*

## FREEDOM FROM CARE

1. While I lived without the Lord,  
(If I might be said to live)  
Nothing could relief afford,  
Nothing satisfaction give.
- 
2. Empty hopes and groundless fear  
Moved by turns my anxious mind;  
Like a feather in the air,  
Made the sport of every wind.
- 
3. Now, I see, whate'er betide,  
All is well if Christ be mine;  
He has promised to provide,  
I have only to resign.
- 
4. When a sense of sin and thrall,  
Forced me to the sinner's Friend,  
He engaged to manage all  
By the way, and to the end.
- 
5. 'Cast,' He said, 'on Me thy care;  
'Tis enough that I am nigh;  
I will all thy burdens bear,  
I will all thy needs supply.'
- 
6. 'Simply follow as I lead;  
Do not reason but believe;  
Call on Me in time of need,  
Thou shalt surely help receive.'
- 
7. Lord, I would, I do, submit,  
Gladly yield my all to Thee;  
What Thy wisdom sees most fit,  
Must be, surely, best for me.
- 
8. Only, when the way is rough  
And the coward flesh would start,  
Let Thy promise and Thy love  
Cheer and animate my heart.

*John Newton (1725 - 1807)*

## Á LETTER FROM Á CONVERTED MUSLIM

(In issue number 20 a letter was printed from a Ghanaian brother in Christ who was previously a Muslim. The extracts from this further letter, received in response to a gift sent to him by some believers in the USA, record some of the problems he has to contend with, as well as the way that the Lord is blessing the spread of the gospel in Ghana. As with the earlier letter all reference to the names of those involved has been left out. This is a pity since at the end of the letter our brother asks for our prayers and many readers of this magazine will want to take this up. It is easier to pray for those whose names are known but as the magazine has some circulation in Ghana there does not seem to be any alternative.)

I have received the amount you sent me through brother ... I used it to hire a small single room in Obuasi, which I am now occupying in Jesus' Name. It has been a great pleasure to me. Since I became a Christian my family and other members of my community have been trying, day in and day out, to kill me through food poisoning or juju, but by God's grace any attempt by them has failed. But I thought it wise to move away from ... and hire my own room.

I have been studying the Bible secretly with some Muslims and God is working wonders. One brother known as ... has accepted Christ as his Saviour. On three occasions his mother came to warn me to stay away from her son or she would deal with me mercilessly. I kept praying for him.

Many Muslims are turning to study the Bible but cannot do it openly, but giving Bibles to them secretly will yield results. You can help by sending me Bibles for these poor souls.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Ghana are turning to the only source of hope—Jesus Christ. Christian literature and Bibles will help them a lot . . .

God bless all your Christian efforts

Yours in Christ.

PS Continue to pray for me.

## THE QUESTIONS OF A RICH MAN

“...how can man be just with God?” (Job 9:2)

“Who can bring a clean man out of the unclean?” (Job 14:4)

Job lived about 1500 BC. He was a wealthy man; the first few verses of the book of Job in the Bible give us some idea of his possessions. It says that he had 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 asses, and many servants. He was a rich man and we find that he asks a number of questions, the kind of questions people ask today. Have you never wondered how you can be just before God?

Job was in great trouble when he asked that question. He had lost his family and property and wished that he had never been born. But we are told that even in his extremity he did not curse God! No! He asks: “How can man be just with God?”

The gospel provides the answer to that question. It is fine to be able to say to those who are troubled in their minds about that question, that God can forgive sinners, and to point them to the finished work of Jesus.

God has the same plan of salvation for everyone and it is centred in Jesus. It is beyond us to save ourselves. First of all, the Holy Spirit begins to work and in our consciences we become aware that we have to meet God. God was working with Job and that is what caused him to ask such questions.

Job's next question is: “Who can bring a clean man out of the unclean?” Social workers would like to have that one answered. An immense amount of money and effort is spent trying to improve people by altering their circumstances. Without a thought for God or the Saviour, they try to bring a clean person out of an unclean. Who can take a person in their sins and by improvement, socially or financially, change the heart of that person and make them clean? Job was an intelligent man and he provides the answer:-- “Not one!” The only answer is Christ--He alone can save, can change hearts and make them clean. We can pour millions of pounds into social improvement but the key to salvation is Christ.

Eventually Job comes to the end of his questions and self-righteous pleadings. It says: “The words of Job are ended”, and at that point God brings in His word through a man called Elihu. Job's three friends, who did not know God, had told him that all his sufferings were due to his wrong doing, but Elihu tells him something different. He says, ‘God is working in your heart’. Today God would speak to you in Christ, to draw your attention to His finished work on the cross.

Paul writes<sup>5</sup> to Timothy and says there is "One God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom". Do you realise that Jesus gave Himself a ransom? Every now and again in the news we hear of a ransom demand of some kind, but there is no ransom price like that which Jesus had to pay for you. Oh that you might see that the ransom has been paid and that you can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray to Him, ask Him to come into your heart and life and cleanse you.

Job 33 speaks of a man who says, "I have sinned". That is the proof of conversion; you come to it that you are a sinner for whom Jesus died and that He has paid the penalty for your sins. Conversion means that you are turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Could there be a greater contrast? Conviction came into Job's soul. He says to God: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself". That is conversion!

What happened to Job after that? Well, God blessed him. And He will bless you if you will in simple faith open your heart to Christ.

*Eddie Holland*

*(Copies of this article in tract form are available freely from the editor.)*

## **SIX THINGS IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN—PART 4**

### **DAILY BREAD**

**"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11)**

I suppose we all believe that the daily bread here referred to is that which meets the need of the body. Those who know not God seek after what they may eat and drink, and what they may put on. Their concern is all about the body; we can rejoice that our Father knows we have need of these things, and He cares for us in every detail of that need. But I wish to use these words to-night to impress upon you the importance of having your soul nourished every day. We need food for our bodies every day, and it is not less needful to have something fresh from the Lord for our souls.

Now, come, what have you had from the Lord to-day? Well, you may say, 'I have been reading a very good book, and part of one of the periodicals'. I am glad to

hear it,<sup>5</sup> but did you get anything from the Lord? 'I have read one or two chapters in the Bible'. I am very thankful for that, but still you might read many chapters without getting anything from the Lord to meet the present need of your soul. Reading and hearing are like looking at the food, but it is another thing to get the good of it. Food is that which satisfies a felt need and unless we have an appetite there is not even the desire for it.

It is one of the great principles of God's ways that He "satisfieth the longing soul" and "fills the hungry with good things". Hence the subject of the soul's daily bread is a deeply experimental one. The food of which I speak is the gracious supply to our souls of that which answers the exercises and meets the need of which we become conscious in our experience day by day. I do not mean your external need but the need of your heart and spirit in the various experiences of your soul.

One or two scripture illustrations may perhaps serve to make my meaning clear. On the night of the Passover in Egypt the children of Israel had the blood of the lamb to make them safe and the word of Jehovah to make them sure but they had also the lamb roast with fire for their food. The soul in the position thus typified has a perfect shelter from judgment in the precious blood of Christ, and a perfect assurance in the Word of God, but has he no longings, no exercises, no experience? He has escaped the judgment, it is true, but he feels how near it has been to him; he is conscious how truly he deserved it. It is a solemn hour for him; he has no doubt as to his safety, but still it is a solemn hour, for God in His holiness is passing over. Is there no food for him? Is there no gracious supply of the very thing which will meet his present need?

Indeed there is: he feeds with self-judgment ("with bitter herbs they shall eat it") on the lamb "roast with fire". He appropriates to himself and takes into his moral being the precious fact that Christ has fully borne the judgment of God and this meets the hunger of his soul. He loves to think of the spotless perfection of the Victim — of the love that made Him willing to bear the judgment — and of the infinite value of that divine work which has exhausted for ever the judgment under which he lay. The meaning of Calvary's darkness — of the cry of the Forsaken One — of the triumph - shout "It is finished" becomes great and real. The soul enters into it, takes possession of it by faith, feeds upon it. I trust we all know something of this!

At another stage of their experience the children of Israel were found in the wilderness - the place of no human resources — but they had food there, and they had it every day. Those who have seen the salvation of God and have escaped from the judgment-land by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ,

find themselves in the wilderness, that is, in a place where they have fresh needs and exercises every day, without any human resources to satisfy those needs or answer those exercises. Alas! the perverseness and rebellion of Israel only too well represent our own. How often have our hearts refused the lessons of the wilderness, and sought to find a more pleasant and easy path where daily exercises of soul might be avoided! In the world we had no such exercises, and to escape them have we not often been ready to make a captain of our own choice and go back to be sustained by human resources? How truly is the wilderness the place where we learn what is in our heart! (Deuteronomy 8:2).

But the manna fell every day. If they had fresh hunger every day, they had also fresh food every day. For the renewed needs and exercises of every day we may have renewed supplies of heavenly grace to sustain us in the path of faith. There is One in glory who knows every bit of the wilderness, for He has been through it. He is out of it now but from where He is in glory we may have the daily supply of grace suited to our wilderness experiences from One who knows well what wilderness circumstances are. Paul would have liked to escape from the exercise caused by the thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12), but he was better off with it than without it, for along with it he got what I think answers to the manna: "My grace is sufficient for thee". I am sure if you have known anything at all of this you will say that it is infinitely better to have the exercise and the grace than to be without them. As I said, this is very experimental, and when we come to experimental things we find out where we are.

Doctrines will not help you in your everyday needs and exercises; you must have the supply that is suited to them fresh from heaven. You must have "daily bread". The manna that sustained you through yesterday's experience will not do for today. You must have fresh grace from the Lord in glory for every hour of need. Thus the heart's intercourse with heaven is kept up from day to day, and our affections become more and more attracted to the Person and the place from whence our supplies come.

We have all, I trust, passed through some stages of divine experience. We have been, through grace, awakened, converted, led to trust in Jesus, and brought into peace with God on the ground of Christ's death and resurrection, but at this point many seem to stop. They have got all they want and they settle down and go to sleep — that is, they live more or less on the same principles as unconverted men. I ask you, young believer, whether it would not make a great difference in your life, if you were to accept a path where human resources cannot sustain you, and where you have to look continually to the Lord in glory for the supply of daily grace to carry you on. You cannot get on, as a christian, on your own



resources. Your only strength lies in "the grace which is in Christ Jesus", and you may have it fresh as the food of your soul every day and hour. This would keep us out of all ruts and formalities — there would be nothing humdrum or mechanical about our lives — because every day would bring fresh experiences of the grace of Christ, and the sense of His interest in us would knit our hearts more and more to Himself. May the Lord preserve us from becoming insensible to our daily need, or indifferent to the present grace that His love delights to supply as our daily bread!

C. A. Coates

(In the next issue: 'The Daily Cross'.)

## CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Sherfield Hill, Basingstoke

17<sup>th</sup> April, 1875

Dear...

Since you saw me, it has pleased the Lord to let me suffer a fall from my horse, which has had the effect of laying me on my back in bed for the last fortnight! But though thus laid up in body, I have greatly enjoyed the opportunity for reading most of the works you so kindly sent me, and in thoroughly investigating and considering the subject of church worship.

I have for a very long while been a dissenter from the English Church liturgy, and have rebelled at the propriety of forms of prayer being prescribed for mixed congregations, to be used under all circumstances and by all ages.

I have long ceased to find either spirit or comfort in using them. This drove me, five years ago, to a very liberal chapel in...where...presides. But there, though form is absent, because the prayers are extempore, the worship of spirit could not be present; inasmuch as the whole body have to be silent throughout, and the minister alone, whether in the mood or not, must frame the prayer for all. Still I have thought this church to approach as nearly to a correct standard as any beau-ideal that could be imagined, and I saw no way of improving upon it.

Just before I saw you here, however, my son had called my attention to the three chapters in Paul's Epistles, Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 (which you know so well), together with the various passages in the Acts relating to the assembling together of the apostles and early christians to break bread. A careful consideration of the above was an excellent preparation for your "Lectures

on Christian Worship" and "Christian Ministry". In thanking you for the copies sent me, I have much more pleasure in thanking you for writing them. They are, in my judgment, unanswerable, and have convinced me that the one president over a congregation assembled for worship is a human institution.

I had broken bread at X's humble room for the first time the very day before my fall from my horse; so that if my changed views had been the result of anything but well and long considered convictions, there would have been room for superstition! How great is the privilege of that light which a real knowledge of God's truth opens to us!

I have long enjoyed the study of God's word, and the peace and joy it affords to faith. But I had a want; and it was more communion with Christ in public worship. I think this is now supplied...

*Gillery Pigott (1813 - 1875)*

## PROVERBS—THE BOOK OF RELATIONSHIP

Proverbs is the book of relationship, hence the oft repeated salutation: "My son", and sometimes "Hear, O ye children". It is the father addressing the family. In the book of Ecclesiastes the name "Jehovah" (indicating covenant relationship with God) is not once found but in the Proverbs it is found over 100 times.

To appreciate the Proverbs of Solomon we must be established in our souls in the truth of relationship—the relationship which exists between us as the children of God and God as our Father. Otherwise, in considering the exhortations of this book we shall become legal.

Chapter 10 begins with the heading "The Proverbs of Solomon". All that goes before in the book is really introductory to these proverbs, to establish us in a sense of relationship. The father would impress upon his sons and daughters the sense of the place that they have. Of course the relationships as taught in the Proverbs are not those of sonship in new creation on the other side of death. In that sphere there is no distinction between sons and daughters, but in the kingdom, in the present time, which is what the Proverbs deal with, there are sons and daughters. As the apostle Paul quotes: "Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Solomon wrote three books. The Song of Songs was written when he was a young man. Solomon did not understand the spiritual import of what he wrote. The song is really a love song devoted to Pharaoh's daughter—his Gentile bride. But the Spirit of Truth guided the pen of Solomon, so that when we cast the light of christianity upon it we find the reciprocal affection which exists between Christ and the church. It also has a bearing upon Israel.

At the end of his life Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. He wrote it after terrible backsliding, backsliding which made his wisdom forsake him. Ecclesiastes is inspired from start to close as far as the record is concerned. Solomon was inspired to write it, but many of the things which he tells us he said in his backsliding days and he was never inspired to say such things. Those who teach the doctrine of annihilation, and other kindred evil doctrines, go to the book of Ecclesiastes to prove their theory. But when Solomon records that as a backslider he said that man dies like a beast, he tells us that he said it in his heart; it was when he was away from God. He spoke as a mere human philosopher, speculating apart from the revelation of God. Many of the things Solomon records were what he said when he was away from God and he was never inspired to say. Judas was never inspired to betray the Lord, nor Peter to deny Him. The Jews were never inspired to crucify Him, but the evangelists were inspired to record these and many other events and words which were not inspired of God.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the key expression is, "I said in mine heart". When a man begins to say anything in his heart when away from God, he gets very wide of the truth. "Thou hast said in thine heart" was spoken to Satan (Isaiah 14:13). David "said in his heart" (1 Samuel 27:1), so did Jeroboam, and also the evil servant of Matthew 24. "Say not in thine heart" (Romans 10:6) is a needful warning.

In between the writing of the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, Solomon wrote the Proverbs, a book full of practical wisdom as regards our everyday pathway. Yet we must go through the book in the spirit of relationship. Paul in quoting from it says, "Ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons". We should write across the Book of Proverbs: "Which speaks to you as to sons".

Now the first thing that the father claims in addressing his children is the ear: "Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother". The maternal spirit comes in here. The mother echoes what the father says but in different words. At the weekly Bible reading there is a fine opportu-

nity to break the truth up, to breathe the maternal spirit and help develop our understanding.

The father claims the ear. In the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14 the blood was placed upon the ear before it was placed on the hand and the foot. Then consecrating oil was placed on the cleansing blood. Thus we learn that not only are our members redeemed by blood, but consecrated to God by the Spirit. The first member touched by the blood and the oil was the ear. God claims the ear first.

In incarnation the Lord's ears were "prepared" (Psalm 40:6); in His life His ears were "opened" (Isaiah 50:5). In His death His ears were "bored", for He is the fulfilment of the type of the Hebrew bondman who was brought to the door post and whose ear was bored through with an awl, and he became a servant for ever (see Exodus 21:6).

The next exhortation is: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words." Every word of the father we must keep. Sometimes the omission of a tiny word can make a very great difference. The disciples missed out the little word "if" in John 21:22, 23 and as a result a false tradition was spread.

It says: "Hide my commandments with thee". (They need to be hidden because the devil wants to rob you of them.) "So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding." Mary sat at the Lord's feet, **listening** to His word. She was eager not to lose anything. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" says Paul (1 Timothy 4:15). How blessed to be able to progress thus! It is the result of listening, meditation and prayer. We cannot get on without prayer. the Lord said to Jeremiah, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3). "The treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are hid (Colossians 2:3). We must search for them. We never get anything really from God except through seeking—"Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 2:5).

A further exhortation is: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments". James tells us that a man who is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his doing. How prone we are to forget. But God is very gracious to us. Although what you heard in an address seems to go from you very quickly, yet it may leave a divine impression on your soul; then when you get before the Lord you find that things come back to you in a wonderful manner. We get a good many psalms in acrostic form. The closing chapter of

the Proverbs describes the features of the virtuous woman, typical of the church, and the verses are arranged acrostically. God has given us these acrostic passages to help us in remembrance.

Let us turn to Proverbs 4. "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings." A young man goes out in life. He is commanded very distinctly by his father about certain things; but then there are the sayings of the father that the young man, if he is worth anything, treasures up in his mind.

"Keep them", it says, "in the midst of thine heart". But then the heart itself is to be kept. "Keep thy heart more than anything that is guarded; for out of it are the issues of life." Backsliding starts with the heart. Above all things we should keep our hearts, our affections, from wandering. If we find that there is less desire for christian company, or to commune with God in secret and to feed on His word, or to engage in His service, there is decline in our affections. We should stop in alarm, for backsliding starts in the heart.

The backslider may be right enough outwardly, but sooner or later his heart affects his ways, and then alas, he proves that "the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways". "Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on." Moses when he slew the Egyptian, looked this way and that way. If he had looked up to God, God would have told him not to do it! But Moses was thinking of men, not of God. It is important as regards any line of service not to look to anyone but God. It is blessed to have the fellowship of our brethren, but service is very individual. The servant gets his instructions from the Lord and not from his fellow servants.

Then we must be sure that our path is divinely given. We have here: "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established". "But the path of the righteous is as the shining light, going on and brightening until the day be fully come." We may wake up early in the morning and all is dark. Presently dawn comes, light trickles through the curtains. At first we can only dimly see the objects in the room. Then the light strengthens. At last the sun shines! So it is with soul progress. We should go on slow and sure. Thank God for any glimmer of light that comes to us; let us be true to it. It has never been God's way to dazzle His people with fresh light. When He introduces anything fresh He does it gradually. In the Acts of the Apostles, Judaism gradually fades and christianity shines in.

"Keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother." "Bind them continually upon thine heart." Bind them—they are very prone to slip off.

“Tie them about thy neck.” What a beautiful necktie! Let us wear it. It may cost us a great deal of spiritual exercise but it will be worth it. “Bind them continually upon thine heart. ... When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.” It speaks of lovely intimacy with God. We want to know more of it.

The commandment goes into details; it gives us light for one step at a time. But the word as a whole is light. It illuminates the whole of our pathway. “The entrance of thy words giveth light”, says David (Psalm 119:130). The Spirit of Truth alone can give us light, can open up the word.

In chapter 7 we read: “My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee”. Many people believe in laying up in the bank against a rainy day. If we lay up the commandments of God in our hearts, depend upon it we shall safeguard our soul against a rainy day. The rainy day comes to our souls when we cannot see the sun. Everything is gloomy. How blessed to be prepared, to store in our hearts what will keep us going when the dark days come.

Nothing is too small to be controlled by the word of God. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”. Can you read that novel in the name of the Lord Jesus, or smoke that cigarette, or go to that worldly entertainment? But in much less flagrant things, how this word touches us! Whatever we are undertaking, we ought to be able to do “in the name of the Lord Jesus”, by His authority.

In Proverbs chapters 8 and 9 we have wisdom. In chapter 8 ‘wisdom’ is singular. In chapter 9 it is plural. Wisdom in chapter 9 is a figure of the church. In Ephesians, Paul says: “In order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly the all-various wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10). Christ on high is the perfection of wisdom, but the wisdom of God, Christ characteristically, comes out in the church.

“Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars”. Every local assembly, formed rightly, is formed by wisdom—the wisdom of Christ, and is supported by her seven pillars. We get them from God’s side in 2 Timothy. Seven times in that epistle we have “in Christ Jesus” spoken of. All God’s purpose and counsel is safely secured in Him. That is the sovereign side. Everything that is for God is vested in Christ Jesus and it is secure. Then there is our side in responsibility. We get it suggested in James: “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy

and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”—seven pillars, morally and safely supporting a local assembly.

The foolish woman also has her house. In 1 Timothy we have the wise woman's house and the behaviour of those composing it (see Chapter 3:15). In 2 Timothy we have the foolish woman's house. It is called a “great house”. What a contrast between the two. The foolish woman has no table; she has nothing to give her guests. She sitteth at the door of her house. She is idle and full of talk, not deeds. The wise woman has too much to do to sit idly at the door of her house. The wise woman has meat, bread and wine. Her table is “furnished”. The foolish woman has none.

The foolish woman is after “passengers who go right on their ways”—she lets other passengers pretty much alone. Paul was a passenger going right in his ways. He says: “one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind ... I press toward the mark”. That is the kind of passenger that the world (the foolish woman) wants to stop. The foolish woman is full of promises, but she fails to fulfil them. She is altogether false. Alas for her guests—they are found in the depths of Sheol. The wise woman warns against the foolish woman. She says: “forsake follies and live”.

David's men were “mighty men” who stood for the throne and the testimony. Solomon's men were “happy men” gazing upon his face. Hezekiah's men were wise men (Proverbs 25:1). May we be numbered among all three. If we would be wise we must study well this book. It is full of practical wisdom. But we must take up these proverbs in the spirit of relationship! We must first hear the voice of the father saying: “my son”.

*S. J. B. Carter*

*Shortened version of an address originally published by George Morrish.*

“the knowledge of the Holy is intelligence” (Proverbs 9:10)

## WHAT DO I LEARN FROM SCRIPTURE? PART 4

I learn that He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

(Ephesians 5:25-27)

I learn that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world; that we might be holy and without blame before Him in love.

(Ephesians 1:4)

I learn that those that believe are sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession,

(Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:22)

that by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,

(Romans 5:5)

that we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,

(Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6, John 14:20)

that they who have received this Spirit not only cry, Abba, Father, but know that they are in Christ, and Christ in them; that thus not only He appears in the presence of God for them, but they are in Him who is sitting at the right hand of God, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool,

(Ephesians 2:6, Hebrews 9:24, 10:12-13)

that they are dead to sin in God's sight, and to reckon themselves so; having put off the old man, and put on the new; alive to God through Jesus Christ (Christ is their new life); crucified to the world, and dead to the law.

(Colossians 3:3-4, 9-10, Romans 6:6, 11, Galatians 2:20, 6:14)

I learn thus that if they are in Christ, Christ is in them and they are called upon to manifest the life of Jesus in their mortal flesh,

(John 14:20, Romans 8:10, 2 Corinthians 4:10)

and to walk as He walked,

(1 John 2:6)

God having set them in the world as the epistles of Christ,

(2 Corinthians 3:3)



whose grace is sufficient for them, and whose strength is made perfect in their weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

I learn that they are converted to wait for God's Son from heaven,  
(1 Thessalonians 1:10, Titus 2:12-13, Luke 12:35-37)

and taught to do so; and that they have the promise that they shall never perish, nor shall any man pluck them out of Christ's hand, (John 10:29)

but that God will confirm them to the end, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Corinthians 1:7-9)

I learn that they have part in these privileges through faith in Christ Jesus, in virtue of which righteousness is imputed to them,  
(Romans 5:1-2, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 3:6, 9, 11, 14, 24-26, Romans 4:16, 24-25, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 11:4, Acts 13:39, and many others)

that Christ, who has obeyed even unto death, and wrought a perfect work upon the cross for them (Philippians 2:8, John 17:4, Hebrews 7:27, 9:25-28, 10:12,18)

is now their righteousness, made such of God to them, (1 Corinthians 1:30)

and that we are made the righteousness of God in Him, (2 Corinthians 5:21)

that as His precious blood cleanses us from all sin, so we are personally accepted in the beloved, (Ephesians 1:6)

that as by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of One many shall be constituted righteous. (Romans 5:19)

I learn that we are sanctified, or set apart to God, by God the Father, through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, and by the operation and power of the Holy Ghost through the truth, so that all christians are saints,  
(Jude 1, Hebrews 10:10, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Corinthians 6:11, John 17:17, 19, 1 Peter 1:22, Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:2, Ephesians 1:1 and others)

and that in our practical state we have to follow after holiness,  
(Hebrews 12:14, 2 Peter 3:14)

and grow up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, being changed into His image, to whom we are to be perfectly conformed in glory.

(Ephesians 4:13 & 15, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 3:2-3, Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 5:23)

I learn that the Lord has left two rites, or ordinances, both significative of His death; one initiatory, the other of continual observance in the church of God — baptism and the Lord's supper.

(Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, 8:12,16, 36, 9:18, Ephesians 4:5, 1 Corinthians 1:17, 1 Peter 3:21, Romans 6:3, Colossians 2:12, Matthew 26:26-27, Mark 14:22-23, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 10:3-4)

I learn that, when Christ ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; and that from Christ the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love.

(Ephesians 4:6-13, Acts 2:33, 1 Corinthians 12:28, Romans 12:6, 1 Peter 4:10-11, Matthew 25:14, Luke 19:13)

I learn that, as the grace and sovereign love of God is the source and origin of all the blessing,

(John 3:16,27, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 4:7, Ephesians 2:7-10, Titus 2:11)

so continual and diligent dependence on that grace is that by which we can walk after Him and to His glory, who has left us an example that we should follow His steps.

(John 15:5, Philippians 2:12-13, 1Thessalonians 5:17, Romans12:12, Luke18:1, 2 Peter 1:5-10 and many others, John 8:12, 10:4, 12:26, 17:10, 2 Corinthians 5:15, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Romans 14:7-8, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17, 1 John 2:6, 1 Peter2:2)

I learn from the example and authority of the Lord and His apostles that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are inspired of God, and are to be received as the word of God, having His authority attached to it, and which works effectually in those that believe,

(Matthew 4:4,7,10, Luke 24:25-27,44-46, John 5:39, 10:35, Matthew 5:17-18, John20:9, Matthew 1:23 and a multitude of passages)

and that the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, being understood, not by the wisdom of man, but by the teaching of God, being spiritually discerned, and that they are revealed, communicated, and discerned by the Spirit.

(Psalm 19:7, Hebrews 4:12-13, Luke 24:45, 1 Corinthians 2:10, 1 John 2:20, 27, John 6:45, 1 Corinthians 2:12-14)

I learn that, while God alone is immortal in and by Himself,

(1 Timothy 6:16)

the angels are not subject to death,

(Luke 20:36)

and that the death of a man does not affect the life of his soul, be he wicked or renewed, but that all live still as to God, though dead,

(Luke 12:4-5, Matthew 10:28, Luke 16:23, 20:38)

and that the wicked will be raised again as well as the just.

(John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15)

I learn that every assembly of God is bound by the exercise of discipline, according to the word, to keep itself pure in doctrine and godly walk.

Hebrews, 12:15-17, 1 Timothy 3:15, Titus 3:10-11, 1 Corinthians 5:7, 13)

*J. N. Darby*

*(This is a re-arranged extract from Volume 23 of the "Collected Writings" of J.N.Darby. This extract concludes the series— "What do I learn from Scripture?")*

"I have joy in thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."  
(Psalm 119:162)