

Living Water

If you know of any one who might like to subscribe to "*Living Water*" please write to the address below; their name will be added to the mailing list and they will receive the next few issues of the magazine free of charge.

"*Living Water*" is edited by Mark Lemon & published by Stone Publishing Trust (Registered Charity 1034689)
'The Eagles', Headcorn Road,
Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BU

Correspondents in the UK are welcome to use the
Freepost address:-
Stone Publishing Trust,
FREEPOST TN3448, Staplehurst, TONBRIDGE,
Kent, TN12 0BR

Quotations from the Bible given in "*Living Water*" are normally from the Darby translation or from the Authorised (King James) Version.

Articles are sometimes shortened or otherwise amended.

All articles are Copyright to the Stone Publishing Trust.

Printed by Christian Design & Print,
34, Prior's Way, Coggeshall, Essex. CO6 1TW. UK

Living Water — Issue No 29

	Page
Recent Ministry	
ENCAMPMENTS IN THE JOURNEY OF FAITH - 1 Alex Mowat An Encampment at the Feet of the Lord	4
CHANGED BY THE LIGHT OF DIVINE GLORY Ron Gregory	7

Poetry Selection

THE MAN IN THE GLORY	George Cutting	13
HIS NEVER FAILING LOVE	H. D'A. Champney	15
BUT I LOOK UP	Anon	16
MY LORD AND I	Anon	17

(Over the last few months several readers have sent poems for the magazine. They vary widely in style but all of them have given comfort and encouragement. It is not possible to print them all but the four above are some of those submitted.)

Testimony Section

JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR US	Brian Parr	19
(Continuing the series of tracts for today. Copies are available freely to any who may wish to distribute it.)		

A Voice From the Past

SIX THINGS IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN PART 5: The Daily Cross	C. A. Coates	20
--	--------------	----

A Word for Today

"TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR EARS"	Sidney Wheatcroft	22
(Continuing the occasional series of preachings from the Old Testament.)		

ENCAMPMENTS IN THE JOURNEY OF FAITH — PART 1

AN ENCAMPMENT AT THE FEET OF THE LORD

Matthew 11:28 - 30

I want to speak tonight about the believer's encampments in the journey of faith.

Matthew 11 is an early 'encampment'. We take up the invitation to come to Christ and discover the restful conditions to be found in His presence. It is wonderful that the One whose rest was in God alone (and God's rest was in Him) will provide a haven of rest, a peaceful encampment, for weary and burdened souls. Let me ask you at the start of this meeting; have you found Christ as a resting place?

Who is the One who sends out the invitation to "Come unto me?" Who is this One who would draw our hearts to Himself? What are His credentials? It is recorded in chapter 11 that the cities of the day rejected Christ. He was, as the prophet says: "Despised and left alone of men", and "One from whom men hide their faces" (Isaiah 53:3). Yet I find this very Person in Matthew's gospel shineing like a beacon over the darkness of His rejection, and I find His compelling love drawing me to Himself first of all because He is willing to take on my burdens. He is offering rest. "I will give you rest". Then, "ye shall find rest to your souls". I find Him so approachable, so different from every other man, a king, but meek and lowly in heart. In the human heart there is pride and self-seeking, but in this blessed One who would invite me into His presence to find rest, I find One who has nothing but blessing for me and nothing but glory for His God. Oh, that our hearts may be freshly drawn to Him today!

The peace and rest that can be found in His presence are not blessings that you can experience just in a moment. It takes time to enter into the joy and blessedness of the experience of Christ's presence and so I must do more than simply go to Him and lay down my burden and leave. I must go to Him, and stay, and experience this encampment in His presence. The experience of blessing and rest at His feet is real. He says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest". But when I go there I discover that the love in His heart has so much more blessing in mind. The moral graces that I find in Him can be found nowhere else. As taking up the invitation and coming to Him we will find rest for our souls.

As I take up that invitation and make my encampment at His feet, there is the possibility that in His love He will reveal some new treasure to my heart. In the verse just before where we read He speaks of the Father and "he to whom the Son may be pleased to reveal him". How blessed that there is the possibility that He will reveal a treasure concerning His Father. So it is worth while making the move and by faith, by the Spirit, coming to Him.

Mary of Bethany made her encampment at the feet of the Lord to listen to His word. For her, for the moment, service took second place. All must take second place as she sat at His feet and drank in these words of wisdom, of grace, of love and thus received that lovely comment from Christ Himself. "Mary has chosen the good part" (Luke 10:42).

I wonder where your encampment is tonight? Is it at His feet? Will it draw forth this personal comment from Christ Himself, that you have chosen the good part which shall not be taken away? Oftimes we are very anxious to be doing things. That is right, because christianity is a doing matter. He that "hears my words and does them" (Luke 6:47) finds blessing. Let me not dampen any enthusiasm on the doing line, but let us take time, in this encampment at the feet of Christ, to contemplate Him and let the glory of His speaking sink into our hearts.

John, the gospel writer, made his encampment in the bosom of Jesus. How wonderful were the results and so will the results be of making our encampment in that restful atmosphere at the feet of Jesus.

You think about Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9. His early impression is, "What wilt thou have me to do, Lord?" That is a right question, and he was given a full answer which would involve carrying the name of Christ before kings and nations and the turning of persons from darkness to light, but in Damascus Paul placed himself under the authority of his new Lord and he was given another command to go to Arabia. He is not sent there to evangelise, teach or minister. Yet I think the encampment that Saul found in Arabia for over two years was one of the most profitable encampments in his whole christian experience. There he learnt himself as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, blameless as to the law. In that encampment in Arabia Saul learnt that that man in whom he had built up so much confidence had gone, gone in the death of Christ.

As you read Paul's letters it would seem that Paul studied the detail of the death of Christ and what it had brought about in the removal of man after the flesh. When he writes his epistles, woven into them are aspects of the death of Christ that are recorded nowhere else. I believe that these may have been the product of his time in Arabia.

In every one of his epistles Paul brings in the death of Christ. Whether it is in connection with redemption through His blood, the cross, burial, or circumcision, somewhere Paul will bring you to the death of Christ. I think the beginnings of that revelation about the death of Christ came to Paul as he was there at Arabia. So he learned himself, just as Moses did in the desert. We might have thought that he was wasting his years—but no, how valuable that encampment in Arabia was, away from every distraction, just to learn Christ. Not only would he learn about the death of Christ, but he would learn about the Man who had spoken to him from the glory.

Dear friends, these encampments on the christian journey are to be learning experiences; we are not to be journeying all the time; there are to be times to pause, to consider, to contemplate, and to learn the lessons of the wilderness. Let us have an encampment like Saul of Tarsus, or Mary of Bethany, or John, an encampment close to the Person of Christ.

Alex Mowat

Extracted from an address at Peterhead, October 1997

(In the next issue a further extract will be printed: "The Encampments of the Wilderness".)

CHANGED BY THE LIGHT OF DIVINE GLORY

2 Corinthians	4: 1-4
2 Corinthians	5: 20 & 21
Joshua	9: 3-6
Acts	7: 57-60
Acts	26: 12-14
2 Peter	1: 16-18

It is in mind to take up the scriptures read with a view to looking in particular at Stephen and Paul as men who saw the light of God and were transformed by it.

Just before where I read from 2 Corinthians 4 it says: "But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. Therefore, having this ministry, as we have had mercy shewn us, we faint not. But we have rejected the hidden things of shame, not walking in deceit, nor falsifying the word of God, ... But if also our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are lost; in whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them."

What is the result of our gazing on the Lord? It does not do to be introspective, but at times we do well to do a little stock taking and to enquire where we are spiritually in relation to the light of the truth that has come to us. I want to stress the glory of the fact that within this company here today the work of God has been wrought in its variety and yet in its oneness and we all have been, and I trust still are, gazing on the glory of the Lord.

Now having said that, it may be that someone here is wrestling in themselves as to serving the Lord. The devil is an ever wily foe who will seek to break our communion and interrupt our intimacy with God. This is something we have to face in our christian experience. So chapter four states: "having this ministry, as we have had mercy shewn us, we faint not". All of us are subjects of mercy. Where would any of us have been without it? We rejoice together in the mercy of God and we look on the One who has demonstrated that mercy.

The hymn says:-

*'See mercy, mercy from on high,
Descend to rebels doomed to die.*

Now we have had our gaze centred on the Man in the glory, who has captivated our hearts, who will continue to do so provided we make way for Him, as we read: "but we all, looking". May we be amongst those who continue to look. If there are matters that need to be judged then let it be that they may be judged in the presence of the Spirit of God.

The chapter goes on to say, and this is the point I would like to stress, that occupation with the glory of God leads to power in gospel testimony. There is a suggestion in the beginning of chapter four that our gospel might be veiled. Please God may it never be. May there be from all our hearts a greater yield for the divine pleasure, fruit of looking upon Jesus and finding in the glory of doing so, this blessed fact that we are all one in the objective that Christ might be made known to our fellow men and that He might become increasingly great to them.

Then in chapter five we read: "one died for all, then all have died; and he died for all, that they who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who died for them and has been raised" (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15). What a challenge that is. He has died for us; He has been raised for us and Paul says on the basis of this that we are ambassadors for Christ, God having put in us the ministry of that reconciliation. The sight of the glory is the great lever to bring Christians together.

"We are ambassadors therefore for Christ, God as it were beseeching by us, we entreat for Christ, Be reconciled to God. Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him". The word ambassador really means an agent. You cannot be an agent for anything you do not understand. That is to say, we ought to be able to bring the mind of heaven to any circumstance because we are ambassadors. We represent the king. We are part of the glory of the service that is under the king's hand. "Put in us the ministry of that reconciliation", it says, and a sorry failure we have made of it. But it is still there. There is nothing short with the service and supply of the Spirit.

"Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us". Note that. That is what it cost Him that we might be ambassadors; He had to be made sin for us. It touches my heart when I think about it. This blessed Man loved us so much that He was

made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. What is the answer going to be? Are you going to be secured as an ambassador tonight?

In Joshua chapter 9 we read of some people who said that they were ambassadors and they were not. A more miserable lot you could not find. Ambassadors? Never! Why did I read it? Because the spirit of soul dryness can sometimes come into our own individual and spiritual life. It says in the book of Joshua (and I am not going into the detail of the trickery they resorted to) that they went prepared as if on a journey and that they "took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-flasks, old and rent and tied up; and old and patched sandals upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy". Is there anything in our christian life that is dry and mouldy? Clothing a bit worn out? Sandals nearly finished with holes in them? These are not the marks of an ambassador!

Can you imagine what it would be like at Buckingham Palace when the gates open and a carriage comes in drawn by four greys. The red carpet is there and out comes the ambassador and as he opens the door and steps on to the carpet you find he is a tramp! No, no! Never!

Let us be careful. Let us see to it that something of the dignity of our calling on high might be with us the more. May there be more formation by the Spirit so that we become a little more like Christ. It says of the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem in Matthew's gospel, that they kept plucking down branches from the trees. What was that for? That the way might be made one of sustained freshness. Beware in your spiritual life of bread that has gone a bit stale, no life in it. The bread that my Saviour presents to you never gets stale. Beware against the deterioration in raiment, because the raiment that my Father gives you never grows old. May it be that nothing of the spirit that was found with these rebels, for such they were in Joshua's day, is found with us but may we be maintained in freshness and power in the service of God, in ministry, and the gospel.

Well, I want to speak about persons who are changed in the light of the glory. Matthew came into my mind as thinking about it. I think that there must have been something irresistible about the Person of the Saviour. There was Matthew at the receipt of customs and Jesus comes along and says, "Follow me", and Matthew leaves everything and follows a Man he had never seen before. More than that, he makes a great feast for Him. Later he writes a lovely gospel.

Matthew saw the glory of the Lord and the irresistible charm that marked my Saviour and he decided that everything else had to go, and he would follow Him and he found out that the Saviour he was following was none other than Emmanuel, God with us!

Another example is that man of Gadara (Luke 8:26) who met Him out of the tombs. I am not going into the detail of that man's life, save to say that he was the epitome of man's wickedness, but he came to see the glory of the Saviour and became a publisher of glad tidings.

I go on to Stephen; in Acts chapter 7 we have an example of one who was affected by the sight of the glory. We read: "I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. And they cried out with a loud voice, and held their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and having cast him out of the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses laid aside their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul. And they stoned Stephen, praying, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And having said this, he fell asleep." Stephen saw the glory of God and Jesus standing. Why was the Saviour standing? Because if the Jews repented, He was prepared to come back. They did not repent. They stoned Stephen, and as they stoned Stephen, it says, "And kneeling down, he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And having said this, he fell asleep". The stones did not cause him to fall asleep. His Lord, whom he had seen standing in glory, took him.

Stephen was already a remarkable servant of the Lord but in one sense he did change. He comes into scripture at the moment of his death with the spirit of a heavenly Man upon him: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". The ministry of reconciliation was no theory to Stephen. He supported it by what he was, by what he said. What a man he was. Even while those stones were battering out his life he says, in the Spirit of his Master, " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

I go on to Acts 26. Paul is now in front of Agrippa and his testimony is remarkable. He goes over his conversion and he says that when he had fallen to the ground he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" If we read the Galatian epistle we find how dreadful Paul's past had been. He tells us of his past in this chapter in Acts. What made the difference between the man that was and the man that now is? He had been gazing on the Lord in glory. He saw a

light above the brightness of the noon day sun and it brought the great, important Saul right down to the earth. He became one of the many whose lives were transformed by the light of the glory of Christ. Saul says, "Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise up and stand on thy feet."

It would be a wonderful result of our time here if someone for the first time rose up and stood on their feet. It is quite right, in many ways, when we are young, for us to be carried by the faith of others but there comes a time in our spiritual histories when we must stand on our feet. Saul did that. Where did he get the help to do it? He got the help to do it when he stood up! One of the things in our christian experience is this, that we often think that we can receive help before a move to the Lord is made. It never works like that.

When I was a young man in my late teens—and I am rather ashamed to say I had not broken bread—I was one of those people who expected something strange to happen inside before I committed myself in a public way to the Lord. Of course it never happened. It has often been said that you get all the help you need after a move is made, never before. It is something to bear in mind. Here is Saul on the ground—what a lesson to learn, and he learnt it. There he is, on his feet. "Rise up and stand on thy feet".

He asks: "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise up and stand on thy feet; for, for this purpose have I appeared to thee, to appoint thee to be a servant and a witness both of what thou hast seen, and of what I shall appear to thee in". That is the ministry of the church and the ministry of the gospel. And the transformation is through a light above the brightness of the noon day sun, the light of divine glory. The glorified Saviour is there. Stephen saw Jesus there in glory and Paul saw Him in glory and it changed their lives.

May it be, as a result of our time together today, that our lives are changed, that we become more committed to the Saviour. It would be very wonderful if there were results for the divine pleasure like this.

The possibility of Saul being used for the divine pleasure in his earlier days could never have been thought of but he was secured. You have been secured, I have been secured through divine grace. May it be that we fill out our lives in the

light of the glory that shines in our Saviour's blessed face, being amongst the "we all" who see the glory of the Lord.

In closing, a word about 2 Peter. "Wherefore I will be careful to put you always in mind of these things, although knowing them and established in the present truth. But I account it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is speedily to take place, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has manifested to me; but I will use diligence, that after my departure ye should have also, at any time, in your power to call to mind these things. 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." What a lovely reference. King of Kings, Lord of Lords. Eyewitness of His majesty. Peter saw the glory and was changed by it.

A word comes into my mind, just to give you another ray of His glory. "Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in" (Psalm 24:7). Now whatever range of divine glory we think of, He is over them all. He is the supreme, glorious, blessed victor over death, over the grave. He is our glorious Saviour who lives on high on our behalf. As our eyes are fixed upon Him, and remain fixed upon Him we shall have some sense of His glory. "Who is this King of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle" (Psalm 24:8). Do you want to comfort the brethren in a day of weakness and smallness? Point them to the One who is the Lord of hosts. Then, "the King of glory". As this scripture came into my mind, I was thankful just to be comforted by it. "Who is he, this King of glory? Jehovah of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah" (Psalm 24:10).

Think about it. Think of the appeal of God's grace in the gospel, that you should be promoted here and now as you leave this room, promoted into the service of the kingdom of God as an ambassador, bringing into the life of your testimony what you know to exist in Christ in glory. That is just my impression. May it be blessed to us all for His name's sake. Amen.

Ron Gregory

Address at Basildon, 26 April, 1997

THE MAN IN THE GLORY

“The Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5)

I wake in the morning with thoughts of His love
Who is living for me in the glory above,
Every minute expecting He'll call me away,
And that keeps me bright all the rest of the day!
But the moments speed forward, and on comes the noon
Yet still I am singing, 'He'll come very soon':
And thus I am watching from morning to night
And pluming my wings to be ready for flight!

There's a Man in the glory I know very well,
I have known Him for years, and His goodness can tell:
One day in His mercy He knocked at my door
And seeking admission, knocked many times o'er.
But when I went to Him and stood face to face,
And listened awhile to His story of grace,
How He suffered for sinners, and put away sin,
I heartily, thankfully welcomed Him in.

We have lived on together a number of years,
And that's why I neither have doubtings nor fears,
For my sins are all hid in the depths of the sea,
They were carried down there by the Man on the tree.
I am often surprised why the lip should be curled,
When I speak of my Lord to the man of the world;
And notice with sorrow his look of disdain,
When I tell him that Jesus is coming again.

He seems so content with his houses and gold.
While despising the ark, like the people of old,
And yet at His coming I'm sure he would flee,
Like the man in the garden who ate of the tree.
I cannot but think it is foolish of souls
To put all their money "in bags which have holes",
To find, in the day that is coming apace,
How lightly they valued the 'riches of grace'.

As fond as I am of His work in the field,
I would let go the plough, I would lay down the shield:
The wearisome service I'd put on the shelf,
And the sword in its scabbard, to be with Himself.
But I'll work on with pleasure, while keeping my eyes
On the end of the field where standeth the prize.
I would work for His glory, that when we shall meet
I may have a large sheaf to lay down at His feet;

That He, too, with pleasure His fruit may review.
Is the Man in the glory a stranger to you?
A stranger to Jesus! What, do you not know
He is washing poor sinners much whiter than snow?
Have you lived in a land where the Bible's unknown
That you don't know the Man who is now on the throne?
Ah, did you but know half His beauty and power
You would not be a stranger another half hour.

I have known Him so long that I'm able to say,
The very worst sinner He'll not turn away.
The question of sin I adoringly see,
The Man in the glory has settled for me!
And as to my footsteps whatever the scene,
The Man in the glory is keeping me clean;
And therefore I'm singing from morning to night
The Man in the glory is all my delight.

George Cutting
(Submitted by *Graham Boyes, London.*)

HIS NEVER-FAILING LOVE

There's nothing like Thy trusted love,
Lord Jesus, here below;
Its sweetness we would daily prove
And all its fulness know.

Thy love is more than we can tell,
It every test has stood;
And though, O Lord, we've known it well,
Yet know it more we would.

All other love may fail us, Lord,
Not so that love of Thine;
It is as steadfast as Thy Word,
Eternal and Divine.

How beautiful to live with Thee,
To live in all Thy love!
How sweet to think that we shall be
At home with Thee above.

Thy love has ever been our shield,
Our comfort every hour;
Our safety in the battlefield
From every hostile power.

We wonder how Thy love can give
Such constant, fresh delight;
And long yet more and more to live
In love so pure and bright.

Thy love has thought of every need,
Of all the pressure here;
And ever lives to intercede,
Till we are with Thee there.

In love Thou did'st our souls redeem,
And on the cross didst die;
And that same love shall be our theme
When with Thee Lord on high.

Oh! may we prize the love of Christ
As light and warmth each day;
For nothing less has e'er sufficed
To keep us in the way.

H D'Arcy Champney —
(Submitted by Mark Smith, Newcastle-on-Tyne.)

BUT I LOOK UP

I look not back—God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning and regrets;
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,
And graciously forgives, and then 'forgets'.

I look not forward—God sees all the future,
The road that, short or long, will lead me home;
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear for me the burden that may come.

I look not around me—then would fears assail me,
So wild the tumult of life's restless sea;
So dark the world, so filled with war and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort and of ease.

I look not inward—that would make me wretched.
For I have naught on which to stay my trust;
Nothing I see but failures and shortcomings,
And weak endeavours crumbling into dust.

But I look up—up to the face of Jesus! . . .
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled;
And there is joy, and love, and light for darkness,
And perfect peace, and every hope fulfilled.

Anonymous

(Submitted by Joe Taylor, Wolverhampton)

MY LORD AND I

I have a Friend so precious,
So very dear to me,
He loves me with such tender love,
He loves so faithfully.
I could not live apart from Him,
I love to feel Him nigh;
And so we dwell together,
My Lord and I

Sometimes I'm faint and weary,
He knows that I am weak,
And as He bids me lean on Him,
His help I gladly seek.
He leads me in the paths of light,
Beneath a sunny sky,
And so we walk together,
My Lord and I.

I tell Him all my sorrows,
I tell Him all my joys,
I tell Him all that pleases me,
I tell Him what annoys;
He tells me what I ought to do,
He tells me what to try,
And so we walk together,
My Lord and I.

He knows how much I love Him;
He knows I love Him well;
But with what love He loveth me,
No tongue can ever tell.
It is an everlasting love,
In ever rich supply;
And so we love each other,
My Lord and I.

He knows how I am longing
Some weary soul to win;
And so He bids me go and speak
A loving word for Him.
He bids me tell His wondrous love
And why He came to die,
And so we work together,
My Lord and I.

He tells me of His Kingdom,
It is not far away;
And Oh His heart is longing
To take me there some day;
Immortal joys are waiting,
And joys that never die;
Soon there we'll reign together,
My Lord and I.

Anonymous.

*Written during the Huguenot persecution.
(Submitted by Mr Clargo, Witney.)*

JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR US!

'CAN'T PAY. - WON'T PAY'

You may remember that the above slogan was used by protesters against the Government's Community Charge, but.. Do you know that there is a much greater debt that we all owe and can't pay?

It is the debt that we all owe to God—a debt of sin, and however hard we try we won't be able to pay it, because we have nothing that God will accept. It can't be paid with money, or with good works, or by being religious.

Yet it must be paid, if we are to be reconciled to God and to have any hope of heaven.

God has provided the answer Himself. He gave Jesus, His own Son, to suffer and die and shed His precious blood for our sins—to pay the debt we owed!

In giving His own Son to die on the cross for us, God has shown clearly how much He loves us, and how much He wants to bless us.

God has been fully satisfied with the work of Jesus on the cross and has raised Him from among the dead, and now offers freely to all who repent of their sins and rest their faith in Jesus, a full and eternal clearance of the whole debt of their sins.

And not only that, God gives riches beyond compare to all who believe in His Son—peace, satisfaction, joy, eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and much, much more—even treasure in heaven, and a home in His house above forever.

It is wonderful to be a believer!

"Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved"

(Acts 16:31).

Brian Parr

(If you would like copies of this tract for distribution please write to the editor at the address given at the front of the magazine.)

SIX THINGS IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN - PART 5

THE DAILY CROSS

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”
(Luke 9:23)

I am quite sure that you would shrink from the daily cross if you did not know something of the present grace mentioned in the last article in this series. It is feeding on the daily bread that enables us to sustain the daily cross, just as in Luke 14 you get the supper first and then the building and the fighting. How could you build or fight unless you were first fed? In a similar way in Hebrews 13 you are first fed from the altar (v. 10), and then you are called to make a journey (v. 13).

I have sometimes tried to get people to take the journey without feeding them, but that is not God's way. When He was going to send Elijah a long journey He fed him first (1 Kings 19). You must feed upon the heavenly grace that comes from Christ, or you will never have the heart to “go forth unto him”. It is when you have learnt that all your supplies come from Him, that you are willing to go forth to Him in the place of shame and reproach, which answers to the daily cross of Luke 9. You take up a path that exposes you to shame and contempt every day.

If a man was seen bearing his cross everybody knew that he had done with the world, and as long as he remained in it he was an object of reproach. To bear the cross is to accept the reproach of being connected with that which is mean and despicable in the eyes of men. A crucified man was inconceivably despicable to both the Jew and the Greek, and we must not forget that though the cross is so highly honoured now in name, it is not really one whit more acceptable to men; and if we are true to the Man who died on the cross we shall be targets for the taunts and the scorn of the world. The daily cross is not bodily affliction or the ordinary trials of life, as so many suppose, for these things are not peculiar to christians: they are the common lot of mankind. The daily cross is the acceptance day by day of a path which so far as this world goes is one of dishonour and reproach.

You may depend upon it that it will never be easy to the flesh to follow Christ and to bear His reproach. How much we need to remember those words of the Holy Spirit: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4: 1). If we are true to Christ it will involve the surrender of much that we naturally esteem — the praise of men, and the honours of life in this world. When our eye gets off Christ we shirk the cross and try to smooth its corners to avoid the scorn and the sneers of the world.

It is a long time since I read Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress', but I have not forgotten that 'shame' was one of the worst enemies he met with. A great soul-winner said that it cost him a struggle to give away a tract; and you may be sure that every bit of real testimony for Christ will cost you something. If you are acting in the flesh, of course you will escape this, for the flesh is not ashamed of its doings, and you may be very well pleased with yourself and your service. But true testimony involves the denial of self and the daily cross, for discipleship will never be a path of liberty to the flesh. As you keep your eyes upon Christ you do not seek to gratify the flesh, but to walk in the Spirit, and you are able to sing from your heart:-

*“Saviour, I long to follow Thee,
Daily Thy cross to bear”.*

The child of God walking in the Spirit does not dread the cross, he longs for it. Like Moses, he esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he has respect unto the recompense of the reward. As you take up the daily cross you will have a present reward in the sense of the Lord's approval; and by-and-by it will be your immeasurable gain in the thousand years of kingdom glory, and your joy for ever. May the Lord encourage all our hearts in this matter!

C. A. Coates

(In the next issue: 'Daily Encouragement')

“TODAY THIS SCRIPTURE IS FULFILLED IN YOUR EARS”

Isaiah 55 : 1-3
: 6-13

I trust you do not mind me reading from the Old Testament. It has often been said that the Old is in the New explained, therefore we value the New Testament. These scriptures in Isaiah would not mean much if we did not have the New Testament.

If there was not the New Testament you would not know anything about God having manifested Himself in Jesus, about Calvary, nor the sufferings of the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. You would not know anything about the Lord blessing persons when He was down here, or of God revealed as Father and the gift of the Holy Spirit. You would not know anything about the church and what it is to the heart of Christ. So we can see how valuable the New Testament is.

The Lord spoke about the Old Testament. At the beginning of Luke's gospel we have a record of the Lord preaching; He was stepping into public service and telling people about Himself. He did not say much but He read from the Old Testament, from Isaiah. Think of the Lord's feelings when He read that scripture. He unrolled the book and read: "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). It is still true. To-day this scripture is fulfilled in our ears. Christ has been to Calvary and He has suffered and He died for you and for me.

He could not have done more; He gave His life. We were reminded of that this morning, in the emblems on the table at the Lord's supper, that the Lord gave His life for us. He gave His body and He shed His precious blood. It comes home to us afresh, we who believe.

We were speaking this afternoon about the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is very wonderful because He lights up scriptures for us. Even with a scripture such as we read tonight, we need the Spirit to light it up with the glory of the One who has been to Calvary's cross. Christ lives on high, at the Father's right hand. What we need is Christ as our Saviour; we need Him as our Lord. We were reminded last night of how the Lord could say, "Come to me all ye who

labour and are burdened" (Matthew 11: 28). What a scene we are in! Think of all the persons who may be in Chippenham who are labouring and are burdened. People are burdened, they are! Some are burdened with too much money! They do not know what to do with it and they would like to buy their salvation yet they cannot. You only get it without money and without price. The price has been paid, paid by Jesus.

You cannot buy salvation. Take the case of blind Bartimaeus; he had no money for he was a beggar but the Lord healed him. There was a man we are told of in the beginning of the Acts who was sitting at the Beautiful gate of the Temple begging. The gospel could come to him without money and without price. Peter and John could say, 'We have no money but what we have we give to you.' "In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazaraean rise up and walk" (Acts 3: 6). They pointed him to the Saviour.

Here we have a scripture of salvation, a call to every one who is thirsty. God wants to satisfy your thirst. God wants to satisfy you. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters". What waters they are, waters flowing with life!

The gospel was first to be preached in Jerusalem. God said, 'I want them saved' but they turned their back on it and they are still turning their back on it. Yet God is a gracious God and He is working with Jews as well as Gentiles but in the main God's earthly people have to wait; they have to suffer while they are waiting. You do not know really how to pray for Israel. God is going to have to say to them. He is going to change their heart and He is going to give them a new spirit. That will be in God's time. He is going to have them back for Himself. In the meantime He is waiting for you and for me. He wants to bless us, poor, failing Gentiles that we are. We have nothing to offer to God; we are outside the bounds of the promises made to Israel and it is only mercy that will save us. We have got nothing to offer; we cannot offer good works. You cannot say, 'I have done very well'. You cannot base a claim on the fact that you were born into a high or a low family. You cannot bring anything. It is without money and without price.

"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?" You look around today; persons are spending money and labour for that which satisfieth not. People labour on and they think they are going to be happy. Their efforts do not

bring happiness and they are empty, with not a thing to offer. Yet they are craving after something. I will tell you what they need—the work of God.

We are much cast upon God, to follow His work through. One of the wonderful services of the Holy Spirit is to cause a different line in persons to begin in new birth. God operates sovereignly by the Spirit and causes persons to feel after God. If someone gets converted God has been there first. It is not the preacher but God's word which has been effective because the Spirit has been there first. One of the services we can thank the Spirit for is that He is labouring, striving with men so that something may happen. That is what we pray tonight. We are cast upon God in regard to His message.

I know there is the other side and a person is responsible if they hear the preaching, but we are cast upon God and if there are conversions it is God's work and the glory all belongs to God. So the word is, why do you spend your money for that which is not bread? It may be a word to us who believe. We may labour for that which satisfieth not.

“Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good”. Think of that. Today we have been able to enter a little upon that which is good. Think of the Lord's Supper. Feed upon that which is good. The Lord said, “My body, which is given for you” (Luke 22:19). God gives you what is good. In the gospel He presents what is good for you because every blessing is in Christ and there is nothing outside of Him. And yet that blessed Man has been to Calvary's cross.

We are told in Isaiah 53 “it pleased Jehovah to bruise him”. Have you ever thought about that? “He hath subjected him to suffering. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong his days”. What a seed there is from the death of Christ. “And the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand”. That is tonight! The pleasure of Jehovah is prospering in the hand of Christ on high.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, but he opened not his mouth”. That is Jesus. He could say in Gethsemane: “Not my will, but thine be done”. Does it appeal to our hearts, that One was prepared to give His all so that we might be free, we might come into the gain of salvation? “He opened not his mouth ... he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was

he stricken. And men appointed his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was there guile in his mouth." What a Saviour He is. What a blessed perfect Man He was down here. He was God manifest in flesh and these beautiful traits are seen in Him.

Think of what the Lord was down here: "He is despised and left alone of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief", "Despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows". Do we think of that when we are passing through times of stress? That is a word that has been used a lot in recent times. People say, 'Oh, he is having a stressful time'. We know something of that. It says here that the Lord was One who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. "We did regard him stricken, smitten of God". Think of what that was at Calvary, that He was stricken of God. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" That was the Saviour at the cross. What He bore at the hands of a righteous, holy God!

We were reading this morning in a Psalm that spoke about God's righteousness. God has a righteous basis. That is why I can stand and preach or speak to any soul as to the wonder of salvation. The world is full of unrighteousness but God has a righteous basis to bless the repenting sinner.

The man in Luke 15 had no money and he could not afford to buy anything. What marked him was that he was repentant. That was the way back. Luke 15 is a wonderful section because the father met the returning son and brought him into the very best. "And they began to make merry."

When the son "came to himself" he remembered home and what he had been in the enjoyment of earlier, because he was a departing son, a son who had left his father and gone out. He thought he could do better for himself. He ended up destitute and it just broke him down. He thought about his father and about his father's home. "I will rise up and go to my father". It is wonderful when this happens in the history of anyone. You say, 'I am a poor sinner, I need a Saviour'. You look up to God, revealed in Jesus. You could not imagine speaking to God or looking up to God except by the fact that He has been revealed in Jesus.

God dwells in unapproachable light but He has been revealed in Jesus. So the way back is by way of the Saviour, One who has borne sin's heavy load at

Calvary. We speak about it lightly, but I trust we can go deeper than that; I trust we can meditate upon the sufferings of Christ. The gospels and the epistles and the Old Testament are full of suggestions of what the Lord went through. Psalm 22 and many other Old Testament scriptures open up the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. We cannot enter into them fully, but they are there to affect our hearts, to subdue us and to make us thankful. As Paul says, "mercy was shewn me" (1 Timothy 1:16).

So we want to incline our ear, to listen to what God has to say. The Lord said, "To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears". They could not get away from it. The Lord had read about it, He had spoken about it, they had heard it through their ears, and it says here, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the sure mercies of David".

Then it says, "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found". I suppose there is a sobering touch about that as though it would say there will be a time when He is not found. That will be a terrible time after the church has gone.

"Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." He could not be nearer than He is tonight. I trust we have proved it today, that He is near: "the Lord is near" (Philippians 4:5). May we prove it through the week, every one of us, that the Lord is near. It would pull us up, perhaps, at times, to think that the Lord is near. He is near by the Spirit. That is how we prove the Lord's presence in our gatherings together.

I love to speak about "he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon". What a Saviour God we have! You can point any one to the Saviour and tell them that God will abundantly pardon. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways". We have to come to that, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways". Whenever you read the scriptures, whenever you may have a reading together, always think about this, that things are always greater than what you are speaking about. God's thoughts are always higher.

The Lord could speak about what came down from heaven—He came down from heaven. He came out of heaven and He went back to heaven. What a work

He did in the time He was down here. It says, "He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem". But He came down from heaven and He went back to heaven. And believers in Jesus belong to heaven. We want to remember that, that God has set us in relation to Christ in glory.

So it says, "that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall do that which I please, and it shall accomplish that for which I send it." It is not a matter of what the preacher says; if God sends a word He causes it to be fruitful. That gives us hope, tonight, because if we look around in the world we see that every thing is going on to judgement. Man is going his own way. Things seem to get worse and worse but they have always been bad really since sin came in. There was a time when men planned to build a tower that was going to reach to heaven! Then, how bad things were when God came in judgement in the flood. But God said, 'I will not do that again'. He sent the rainbow as a testimony that He would not destroy the world by water again.

God is showing grace, showing mercy. He is pointing you to Jesus. Think of all the wickedness upon earth. Dreadful! God could come in with judgment. Instead of that He is coming in with mercy and in grace and He is pointing persons to Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. You can say to every one that Christ died upon the cross. He bore the sins of every one who believes.

The hymn says:-

*'The sinner who believes is free,
Can say the Saviour died for me.'*

He bore it all on the cross of Calvary. All my sins, so great, so many, in His blood are washed away. I love to speak of the blood. Not only did He give His body but He shed His precious blood and laid the basis for God to be able to come out in blessing. The figure of it was in the passover in Egypt. The blood of the passover lamb was to be put on the door post and on the lintel and where that was so the whole house was saved from the destroying angel. It is what Paul says to the Philippian jailor: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house". God has households in mind for blessing.

So he says, "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace". I trust you leave the meeting tonight with joy. "Break forth into singing". We can break forth into singing—"Glory to the Lamb". What a God we have, a God who delights in blessing. The gospel goes out and we follow it with our prayers. If God sends the word out you can be glad about it. Paul said, "whether in pretext or in truth, Christ is announced; and in this I rejoice" (Philippians 1:18).

If God sends the word it is not going to return void. That is very comforting. It does not let us off in any way from our responsibility, but nevertheless as we pray to God about the preaching we can seek that He might follow His word and it will not return void. May there be an answer in all our hearts.

God wants to satisfy us; He gives us the very best, He does! And the Lord Jesus has been to Calvary to make it all possible. And now He is on high and we are told: "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand" (John 3:35). So everything is established in one blessed Man on high. There are great men in the Cabinet, and in high positions in this world, but God has one Man before Him. Christ is able to carry the whole government of the world on His shoulder. That is my Saviour. He is going to come from heaven to rule. It puts every one else into the shade. He is the Saviour of sinners and yet He is the Lord of glory.

Well, may the Lord help us that we might be a little more for Him. There is so much to hold us down to earth, but let us be a little more here for Him so that we can "go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills break forth..." The time is coming when all this will happen actually, yet it is happening now in His people. May we be kept buoyant in the joy of the glad tidings and in the knowledge of our Saviour on high, for His name's sake. Amen.

Sidney Wheatcroft

A preaching of the gospel, Chippenham, 18th May 1997