

***No. 54***

# *Living Water*

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS — CHAPTER 8

### Highlights of a Bible Reading

We get a real sense of the blessing of God when we read a chapter like this. “There is then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death”. The rule of the Spirit of life has set me free. It is a wonderful thing to come into the sense of that. Paul is seeking to encourage the believers in Rome to move into the liberty that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Himself. There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. That is how God views us. We are either in Christ Jesus or we are in Adam. We are either in our sins or we are in Christ. As “in Christ” we are brought into liberty, even while conscious of the weakness of the flesh.

Our standing is in Christ. We do not fall out of our place before God if we sin. Our standing is unchanged. We need the Spirit to be helped into self-judgment but the whole basis is absolutely different from any righteousness from the law.

The law cannot set us free. All it can do is condemn us for we are unable for its demands. We are not under law but are to walk as indwelt and guided by the Spirit of God. In verse 3 we read: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh”. Sin was condemned in Christ being made sin. It is a very solemn fact that that is the ground that the Lord Jesus took on our account.

Verse 4 answers the question at the beginning of chapter six: “What then shall we say? Should we continue in sin that grace may abound?”. This would be a rebuke to any who say that Christians are indifferent to the question of righteousness. The apostle says that the righteous requirement of the law will be fully met by the believer led by the Spirit of God. But rather than having our eye on a series of rules, which at best is what the law sets out, we should actually be seeking to be walking according to the Spirit. In Galatians we read: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall no way fulfil flesh’s lust” (Galatians 5:16). The mind of the Spirit is life and peace (v.6). We are to be thankful for the peace and the liberty we have in the Spirit.

We are all tested as to how much we rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance. When the Lord spoke of “another Comforter” (John 14:16), He had in mind that the Spirit would help us and undertake for us and that we would speak and commune with Him and keep near Him. The Spirit would help us, even to the point brought out in the latter part of the chapter: “for we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting, but the Spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered” (v.26). As feeling our weakness this would cause us to call the more upon the Spirit for help.

In Acts we are told of seven men who were full of faith and the Holy Spirit. That is what should mark every believer. The fact that we are not always fully under the control of the Spirit means that something else has got in to take His place, and that is beneath the proper dignity of a christian. We are all challenged as to how much room we give to the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus was here, He was ‘Comforter’ to the disciples. Now the Holy Spirit is here as another Comforter. He is the One by whom the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and by whom we are joined to the Lord. He will be with us for ever. It is a very striking thing that when we are with the Lord the Spirit will still be with us.

In verse 14 we read, “for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God”. We are brought into the enjoyment of the relationship of sons of God. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of adoption. By Him we know our place of favour in the family of God. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The Holy Spirit is directly connected with our access to the Father. Ephesians reminds us that, “through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father” (Ephesians 2:18). So we need the service of both the Lord and the Spirit in the presence of the Father.

New birth is the Spirit’s work in each one of us; we would not have believed without the operations of the Holy Spirit. As believers, we would have very little consciousness of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, the Father’s love or, indeed, of any of the blessings of christianity without the Holy Spirit. We can see that demonstrated in the apostles and others that companied with the Lord. They had great love for Christ and they went with Him but there was a transformation in their understanding and testimony when the Holy Spirit came.

According to verse 15 we cry “Abba Father” by the Holy Spirit. That is a cry of nearness and blessing. The following verses open it up. We are brought to an understanding of our place in relation to the Father. “We are children of God. And if children, heirs also: heirs of God, and Christ’s joint heirs”. Galatians tells us that “God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

“Abba, Father”, are the very words that the Lord used in the garden of Gethsemane and that is the only occasion that there is a record of their use. It is wonderful that we are given liberty by the Spirit to cry, Abba, Father. It demonstrates the real relationship that we have with the Father as those that belong to Christ. It is a relationship that the Lord Himself announced in resurrection when He said: “I ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God” (John 20:17).

The Holy Spirit brings us into this. “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God”. The question for each of us then has to be, is it so practically? Does the Spirit bear witness with me that I am conscious that God has taken me into favour in His Son, along with others of His saints, so that we may be truly at home in His presence?

The intercession of the Holy Spirit is important. “The Spirit joins also its help to our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as is fitting, but the Spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered.” He intercedes for saints according to God. It is a wonderful matter. The Holy Spirit is here, a divine Person, and as on earth He feels everything in the world and amongst believers. He makes our prayers suitable. “We do not know what we should pray for as is fitting” it says, but the Holy Spirit intercedes so that what reaches God is always and in every way, in accord with the divine mind. How thankful we can be for that. We need to be guided by the Spirit in both our public and our private prayers. We are always to be those who are “Praying in the Holy Spirit”. The Lord intercedes for us in heaven and the Spirit is here operating in the same way.

The Lord, in His utterances in the gospels is very careful to guard the place that the Holy Spirit has in the Godhead. The Spirit is infinitely great and equal with the Father and the Son. Accordingly He is to be worshipped. He has taken a place of lowliness in coming to dwell with the church and in the individual

believer. But even in this the Lord speaks of Him as “going forth from with the Father”. The Spirit is infinitely great in His own Person yet He has come to maintain the glory of Christ. Christ cannot be served by believers unless the Holy Spirit Himself is active in inspiring power in their contributions and praise. Without this, our words are powerless and mere words. This is a prime aspect of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle speaks here of the hope which is before the believer, that of being brought into the “liberty of the glory of the children of God”. Perhaps we do not appreciate enough what a blessing it is to be living with a hope which is beyond this scene. The world is full of sadness, trial and suffering. We read here: “we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, we also ourselves groan in ourselves, awaiting adoption, that is the redemption of our body”. We feel the disordered state of things and have sympathy with others accordingly but we have the hope of the redemption of our bodies.

We are to feel the conditions in the world because God feels them. As believers, we are not to be over-occupied with what happens in the world but we are to feel the lawlessness, violence, corruption, and the sorrow and sadness that sin has brought in. Things are not going to get better. They are going to get worse until the Lord Himself appears.

The conditions that are current today affect the whole creation: “the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now”. Believers should have sympathy with others. The fall of Adam affected the whole of the scene and brought in sin which tarnished God’s beautiful handiwork. It is still that way today. Only when the Lord reigns in the earth will the terror which marks creation be removed. When He rules the groaning, travail, pain, and sorrow will be completely set aside.

There is a “coming glory” referred to here which is to be revealed to us. It is very interesting that there is something wonderful and glorious that God is going to show us; something beyond our understanding and imagination. It will be revealed at the coming of the Lord. When we see Him we shall be like Him for we shall see His as He is. We will need to be changed to see it. The coming glory is something of which we are not told much in the scripture because we are not able to lay hold of it at the moment.

The coming glory is centred in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the coming day everything will be affected by the glory of Christ and all will stand in relation to Him. Instead of the different centres in the world today, everything will be focused on the Christ. Natural limitations of mind and body will have been removed and our great capacity for unbelief will be taken away.

Until that time we have the assurance in this chapter that nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

Based on Bible readings at Bromley – August/September 2001.

## **CHRIST EVERYTHING AND IN ALL**

### **Introduction**

I want to speak from these scriptures of ‘Christ for my soul’, ‘Christ for my affections’, ‘Christ for my life’, and ‘Christ for my hope’. We live in a world where choice and options abound but God has only One man before Him and that is Christ.

### **Christ for my soul**

**And salvation is in none other, for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved.**      A c t s  
4:12

I make no apology for starting with the gospel, because every true believer in Jesus rejoices to hear afresh the story of the One who came in grace to meet the sinner’s need. The scripture tells us that, “None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be given up for ever” (Psalms 49:7, 8). Christ has the ransom paid; there is nothing for you to do but accept what He has done. What a Saviour is presented in the glad tidings. “Salvation is in none other”.

Christ was magnified in Peter’s soul as he spoke here in the Acts. How faithfully he preached and what blessing followed. Peter is speaking to the Jews who had missed the Messiah. Thank God for those who received Him but the bulk of them missed Him. Peter speaks of the Lord as the One who was here and he says, “Salvation is in none other”. How true that is tonight. There is a vast



amount of religion around in the world but salvation is found only in the One who suffered at Calvary's cross.

I appeal to any here who are not conscious of having a living link with the Saviour, to come to Him now. He is available to you. There is no other way of salvation. God has no other man before Him. Nothing other than the precious blood of Christ could meet what stood out against me in the sight of a holy and righteous God.

That blood, shed on Calvary's cross, these 2000 years ago is as effective to cleanse tonight as it was when it was shed. "The soul that sinneth", God said, "it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Then Romans tells us that all have sinned and death has passed upon all (Romans 3:23 & 5:12). Do you trust in the Man who went to Calvary's cross? Are you conscious that your never-dying soul has been cleared in the sight of God? I appeal to you tonight to come to Him.

Do you realise that Christ loves you? He came to make the love of God known. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son" (1 John 4:10). What appreciation do I have of the love of Christ? He loved me so much that He went to Calvary's cross that I might be secured for His pleasure eternally. May you have a sense today of how much Christ loves you.

### **Christ for my affections**

**When therefore they had dined, Jesus says to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He says to him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I am attached to thee. He says to him, Feed my lambs. He says to him again a second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He says to him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I am attached to thee. He says to him, Shepherd my sheep. He says to him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, art thou attached to me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, Art thou attached to me? and said to him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I am attached to thee. Jesus says to him, Feed my sheep... And having said this, he says to him, Follow me. Peter, turning round, sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned at supper on his breast, and said, Lord, who is it that delivers thee up? Peter, seeing him, says to Jesus, Lord, and what of this man? Jesus says to him, If I will that he abide until I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.**

John 21:15-22

This challenge, “Lovest thou me...?” has come before me very strongly this week. I believe the Lord would ask this question of me, even if not of others here tonight. When the Lord asked this question do you think He did not know that Peter loved Him? Of course the Lord knew Peter loved Him. He is testing him to see if Peter was still thinking that he was better than the other disciples for that was what he meant when he said, “Even if all should be offended, yet not I” (Mark 14:29).

I am not here to run Peter down; he was a beloved servant of the Lord but what Peter had to learn is what we have to learn as well. Peter had to come to it that trusting in the flesh would always fail him. Peter really meant it when he said he would not deny the Lord but when the test came he did deny the Lord with oaths and curses. Yet all it took for him to be convicted was a look from the Lord. “The Lord, turning round, looked at Peter” (Luke 22:61). That look went straight to his heart.

Here the Lord says to him, ‘Do you love me more than these?’ Peter says, ‘Yes’. There was something to be worked out here as the Lord challenges him. Why was this necessary? Because of the service that Peter was to take up. If we take up service for the Lord the basis of it must be affection for Him. If we have our own glory in mind it is best not even to begin, because God has no one other than Christ before Him. Every service, however small, has got to spring from an appreciation of Christ’s love and our love for Him.

Peter was given the commission of shepherding His flock. The flock were those who were most precious to Him, those that He had died to secure. How effectively Peter would have served as being motivated by the love of Christ. In his first epistle we find him exhorting the elders to take up the same type of service, telling them to, “shepherd the flock of God”.

Well now, I believe that the Lord would help us to apply this to our own situation. The Lord would say to us tonight, ‘Do you love me?’ What a challenge to our hearts. There is a word in Jeremiah in regard of Israel which says, “Thus saith Jehovah: I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown” (Jeremiah 2:2). How the Lord must have appreciated that burst of affection for Him. On our part, as we know His cleansing and prove His love for ourselves, what

affectionate response springs up in our hearts. Then what happens afterwards? Has our affection for Him waned? What a challenge it is to all of us.

In writing to the Ephesians the apostle Paul could bring in the height of the truth, yet when we come to the Revelation the Lord has to say to them that they had left their first love. Is our strength of affection for the One who died for us as great as it ever was? Let us be stirred in our affections for the Lord tonight.

David could say, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation” (Psalm 51:12). It is a great thing in christianity that things can be restored. The Lord never forgets what our affection for Him has been. We read here that Peter turns round and sees John following. John counted on the love of Christ; he leaned at supper on the breast of Jesus. At least three times he referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. John seemed to have a unique impression of the love of Christ for him and it comes out in his gospel and in his epistles. It is persons like that to whom the Lord is pleased to reveal things.

It is a good thing to rely on the love of Christ. The more I appreciate His love for me the more I love Him and the more it comes out in my life. We find it worked out in these two men. It might be difficult to find two persons more diverse than Peter and John. John seems to have been marked by contemplation; Peter on the other hand is more impulsive but at the beginning of the Acts we find them bound tightly together by their love for Christ and acting in service together. May we be like Peter and John in that way. May we be found here in His service as motivated by love for Christ.

Mary of Magdala is another example. She had been under Satan’s domination, possessed by seven evil spirits, and the Lord cast them out! He became the object of her affections and I believe that is the way this is meant to work out. As I appreciate what Christ has done, so He becomes the centre of my affections. Mary of Magdala’s love for the Lord led her to minister to the Lord in His pathway here on earth; it made her stand by the cross and it brought her to the tomb.

Her affections were fixed on Christ and because of that she got a most wonderful revelation. The Lord revealed Himself to her in resurrection and gave her that wonderful message for His own: “go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend ... “ (John 20:17).

## Christ for my life

**For the love of the Christ constrains us, having judged this: that 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 words these are, “the love of the Christ constrains us”. What an appreciation Paul had of the love of Christ. How it affected his life! I hardly want to speak about this because I know how little it has been worked out in my own life but here it is in Scripture and it is to be arrived at.

Paul came under the sway of Christ. I believe that in our lives that would be demonstrated in at least three ways: in nearness to Christ, in response to Christ, and in power in testimony. Those things were evident in the life of Paul. I do not say that to make much of Paul, for Paul would himself point to Christ. He could speak of Him as, “the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Think of Paul before his conversion, going out of Jerusalem on his way to Damascus with his heart filled with hatred for Christ and those that belonged to Him. In taking the Damascus road he would have gone past Golgotha; as he went on down that road he was going to be met by the One who had suffered there for Him, One who loved him all the time.

What wonderful grace! What would I have been praying about if I had been one of those Christians in Damascus? Would I have been praying for his conversion? Ah, the ways of God are perfect. Paul never forgot the mercy that was shown him; indeed as he went on his appreciation of the love of Christ deepened. The motivation for the whole of his life was love for Christ. Would to God that the motivation for our lives from this point on would be affection for Christ.

So he writes here: “the love of the Christ constrains us”, as if to say, if there is no other reason for living to Him, then let His love be the reason. Is He not worthy of it? Is the Lord not worthy of our full devotion from this point on?

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul is speaking about his desire to be with Christ. (He takes that up in the Philippian epistle as well.) How he desired to be with the One whom he loved. Yet he felt for the needs of the testimony, the needs of the Philippians. Writing from prison he was thinking about these beloved Philippian saints.

What joy comes out in that epistle. Was Paul bowed down by his circumstances? No! He was in the enjoyment of the love of Christ. He learned in the circumstances in which he found himself to be full (Philippians 4:11). In whatever circumstances he found himself Paul appreciated the love of Christ.

Paul speaks of having suffered the loss of everything on account of Christ. Was it a loss to him? No! He counted everything to be filth “on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8). That is a man who has Christ for his object. We are no longer to live to ourselves. We are not our own; we have been bought with a price. Every thing that we are as christians we owe to Christ. Everything that we were as away from Him is gone for ever. In the sight of God that man was finished at the cross of Christ.

What a preservative the cross is. Paul could say, “... the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14). Let us not see the world as a place of opportunity. I know that may be quite a test but let us see that the world is the place where our Saviour was crucified. How am I to be preserved? By keeping close to the cross. Paul, writing to the Galatians, said, “But far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

May we be sensitive as to what suits the Lord. May we be close enough to him to hear His voice. Think of starting each day with an impression of Christ. Am I open to that? As I go through the day am I open to receive communications from the Lord? Sometimes we go through the day and never even think of the Lord. These are matters that should concern us, if our lives are to be set on Christ.

I have to say for myself how little I know about it. But the love of the Christ is to constrain us. That is to be the motivation. Our lives are to be lived as those who are occupied with Christ.

### **Christ for my hope**

**Beloved, now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.**

1

John 3:2,3

John writes at the end of the apostolic time. John lived to see the break-up of what was established at Jerusalem. He lived to see the break-up and the ruin of the church. He lived to see a time when persons were saying that the Lord had never come in flesh and that He was not the Son of God. John writes that we might be assured of these things.

We, too, are in days when persons are saying that the Lord was not the Son of God and that the Lord was nothing but a good man. We are in days of departure. We live in the time that the Bible speaks of when “the love of the many has grown cold”. What will keep us? Nothing but the worth of Christ. Doctrine has its place and we need teaching, but nothing but the Person of Christ will hold us. Nothing but an impression of Christ where He is will hold us until He comes.

John’s gospel is different from the others. He had a unique impression of the glory of Christ. He had contemplated it. John would say that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John had no doubt about that. God was here in Manhood. The One who was here in lowly guise was none other than the blessed God Himself. The One who came out from God is the One who has gone back to God and is the One who is coming for us. Is Christ then my hope? Is there any one in this room tonight who is not rejoicing at the prospect of seeing Jesus?

John is writing to persons who had not seen the Lord when He was here on earth, yet he is assuring them, and us, that “what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” What a hope! Is that your hope? If you have this in your heart you do not see the world as a place where things have to be worked out and achieved; you realise that your hope is bound up with the Man in the glory.

He is the One in whom you have trusted. He is the One who is coming for you, the One who loves you. John could write in the Revelation, “To him who loves us” (Revelation 1:5). John was resting in the love of Christ. As to his circumstances at that time, he was isolated on Patmos. Was he at any disadvantage? No. He became in Spirit on the Lord’s day and he was enjoying the love of Christ. He says, “To Him who loves us!” How triumphant it is!

John tells us something else about the coming of the Lord: “every one that has this hope in him purifies himself”. Think of the purifying effect on our lives as we go out on Monday morning with a song in our hearts because we know that Christ is coming. If that is my hope, what a purifying effect it will have on my

life. It means that I am sensitive as to what suits Him. We are going to see Him as He is. What a hope! What an object of our affections.

### **Conclusion**

May these things be true of us. Christ is for our souls. If any one here has no link with the Saviour I urge you again to trust Him for yourself. Then the things we have spoken of flow out of that. As my soul's need is met I find that I have an object for my affections. As I have an object for my affections so I have a purpose for my life. As I have a purpose for my life so I have a subject for my hope. May it be so, for His name's sake.

*David McIntyre*

*Address at Peterhead, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2001*

## **A HIGH PRIEST ABLE TO SYMPATHISE**

All the path the saints are treading,  
Trodden by the Son of God:  
All the sorrows they are feeling,  
Felt by Him upon the road:  
All the darkness and the sorrow  
From around and from within,  
All the joy and all the triumph,  
He passed through apart from sin.

Now come forth in resurrection,  
Passing onward to the throne,  
Having suffered all the judgment,  
Borne the storm of wrath alone:  
He is able thus to succour  
Those who tread the desert sand,  
Pressing on to resurrection,  
Where He sits at God's right hand.

*Janetta Trench (1843-1925)*

## TREES

Gold and silver, green and brown  
Avenue of shade;  
Wearing summer's leafy gown,  
Trees that God hath made.

Tall and graceful, straight they stand,  
In their dignity;  
Emblems of the christian band,  
Sons eternally.

In that blessed company  
One stands out supreme;  
Over all as Head is He,  
This their happy theme.

As the fruitful apple tree  
'Midst the pleasant wood,  
My Beloved, so is He  
Midst the sons of God.

*E.P.H.*

*Tunbridge Wells, 1951*



## BAPTISM

Death and judgment are behind us,  
Grace and glory are before;  
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus,  
There they spent their utmost power.

“First-fruits” of the resurrection,  
He is risen from the tomb;  
Now we stand in new creation,  
Free; because beyond our doom.

Jesus died, and we died with Him,  
“Buried” in His grave we lay,  
One with Him in resurrection,  
Now “in Him” in heaven’s bright day.

*Janetta Trench (1843-1925)*

## **“IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH”**

A few years ago John Ashton attended a public lecture at Macquarie University, Sydney. Here a research scientist said that he did not believe that any scientist would advocate a literal interpretation of the six days of creation. In reply the chairman offered the names of two well known scientists who did so. As a result Mr Ashton wrote to a number of scientists asking them, ‘Why do you believe in a literal six day creation as the origin of life on earth?’ In response he got not only a vast amount of scientific information but, more importantly, a number of personal testimonies from scientists over a range of disciplines as to what God had done for them.

Stephen Taylor of the University of Liverpool wrote: ‘I became a christian at the age of 16 by seeking forgiveness for my sins and committing my life to the Lord

Jesus Christ in a simple prayer. Although aware of the apparent contradiction between science and the Bible, the fact that Jesus believed in the Genesis account as historically true was enough to convince me that I should also! The disciple is not above his Lord. Many years later I am more than ever convinced not only of the truth of the christian gospel, but also of the harmony between the biblical revelation and true science.'

Several others provided similar witness to God's grace. 'Biblical faith', wrote Jeremy Walter of Pennsylvania State University, 'is a confident and convinced trust in the testimony of One who is both Creator and Redeemer. As His creatures, we need to exercise our faculties in humble submission to His revelation to see Him as our standard for truth.' Elaine Kennedy of the Geoscience Research Institute expressed the same idea slightly differently when she said that the greatest evidence for the existence of a Creator was in her 'personal relationship with Jesus Christ'. As a consequence she said she looked at the geological data from a platform of faith.

John Cimbala of Pennsylvania State University had a different story to tell. He described how he was brought up in a christian home, but because of the teaching of evolution at his High School he rejected the Bible and believed that humans were descended from the lower creatures. In the process he became an atheist. He might have turned from God but God had not turned from him! By the grace of God he was led to study the scientific evidence for creation and from this he came to see that the theory of evolution had no legitimate factual evidence to support it. Suddenly he realised that the Bible was true! From then on, for him, it was only a short time before he came to trust in Christ for himself. This kind of experience of going from a christian upbringing to atheism or agnosticism but being rescued from this, to turn with true faith to Christ was recounted by several others also.

The only question I have is why did God take six days for creation? asked John Kramer of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Canada, pointing out that in the Bible God is shown as an instant Creator. As examples of instant creation Kramer cited the creation of the fish to swallow Jonah, the parting of the Red Sea, water turning into wine, stilling the storm, and raising the dead. He provided an answer to his own question; in completing the work of creation in six days God set a pattern for us with six days of work and one day of rest i.e. (Exodus 20:8). John Kramer' reply continued: I believe in a six day creation because I have experienced

salvation from One who has never disappointed me (Romans 10-11). ‘Therefore, why should I doubt Him if He said — I made it so?’

Andrew McIntosh of the University of Leeds made the perceptive observation that it is because humans do not want to be accountable to a Creator God that they persist with the theory of evolution when there is such a lack of evidence in its support.

Wayne Friar of Kings College, New York took the opportunity in his reply to state ‘...it is very important to realise that the Scriptures deal realistically with the nature of humans. The Bible says that we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and need to experience the salvation made possible when Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). We can experience Biblical truths for ourselves, for example, when we realise that our attitudes to issues in life have noticeably changed following our acceptance of Christ as Saviour (2 Corinthians 5:17). I recall some time after my salvation experience, reading the verse in Romans 8:16 that God’s Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children; and it was exhilarating for me to realise that I had already experienced this glorious truth.’

In several of the replies, respondents dealt honestly with the struggle that they had as they grappled with the issues. Let Kurt Wise (Bryan College) speak for them all: ‘I had to make a decision between evolution and Scripture. Either the Scripture was true and evolution was wrong or evolution was true and I must toss out the Bible. However at that moment I thought back to seven years before when...I had come to know Jesus Christ. I had in those years come to know Him. I had become familiar with His love and His concern for me. He was the reason I was alive both physically and spiritually. I could not reject Him. Yet I had come to know Him through His Word. I could not reject that either. It was there that night that I accepted the Word of God and rejected all that would ever counter it, including evolution’. At that time, as a young student, Kurt believed that any kind of scientific career was over. Since he had dreamed of a career in science, his deliberate decision was all the more an evidence of his commitment to the Lord. In the event he found that a career in science was still open to him.

The Bible repeatedly speaks of God acting in creation: “O Lord my God, thou art very great;...who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain” (Psalm 104:1-2); “Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out” (Isaiah 42:5); “I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretchest forth the

heavens alone” (Isaiah 44:24); “I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isaiah 45:12). John Baumgardner (Los Alamos National Laboratory) quoted these and other scriptures, and then exclaims: ‘As a christian...I exult in the reality that, “in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth” (Exodus 20:11). May He forever be praised.’

“And they... lifted up their voice with one accord to God, and said, Lord, thou art the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them...” (Acts 4:24).

“By faith we apprehend that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that which is seen should not take its origin from things that appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

‘Oh Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,  
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

(Stuart Hine)

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## **JESUS**

I’ve tried in vain a thousand ways  
My fears to quell, my hopes to raise;  
But all I need, the Bible says  
Is Jesus.

My soul is night, my heart is steel,  
I cannot see, I cannot feel.  
For light, for heat, I must appeal  
To Jesus.

He died, He lives, He reigns, He pleads!  
There's love in all His words and deeds;  
All, all the guilty sinner needs  
Is Jesus.

Though some will mock and some will blame,  
In spite of fear, in spite of shame.  
I'll go to Him, because His name  
Is Jesus.

*(These words were found in the desk of a supposed infidel, after his death. It is believed that he wrote them two weeks before he died.)*

## **PAUL AND THE TWELVE**

There is a fundamental unity in the work of the Holy Spirit and this is shown clearly in the ministry of the apostle Paul and that of the twelve apostles. In one sense Paul's ministry of the gospel was but a filling out of the commission given to the apostles by the Lord on earth, to go into all the world, and Paul's ministry of the assembly (or the church) but a light cast on what was built at Pentecost. Paul neither preached a new gospel nor built a new church. The Spirit's work is one.

To speak specifically of the ministry of the gospel, it is remarkable how Paul fits into his place. Let us compare two scriptures:

“And he said to them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all the creation.... And they, going forth, preached everywhere” (Mark 16:15, 20).

“The gospel . . . which has been proclaimed in the whole creation under heaven, of which I, Paul, became minister” (Colossians 1:23).

Paul became minister of the same gospel which the apostles preached. As to the practical carrying out of the commission to preach in the whole creation, we learn from Galatians 2 how Paul was concerned that his own preaching should have its true place in relation to the earlier work, and how he went to Jerusalem by revelation to lay his gospel before those who were conspicuous there, lest he

should have run in vain. There must be but one gospel. We learn too of the agreement made that Paul should go (with Barnabas) to the nations, and they to the circumcision, an agreement signalled by the “right hands of fellowship”. There is but one fellowship.

The ministry of the church (or assembly) is perhaps even more interesting. The same passage in Colossians which speaks of Paul having become a minister of the gospel goes on immediately to speak of “His body, which is the assembly; of which I became minister”. Saul’s first dawning realisation of that body must have come when he heard that voice saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” It was a body already here on earth while Saul was yet a persecutor. There is but one body. That precious revelation of the mystery referred to what was here before the revelation was given.

Nor must we be too dogmatic in affirming that this revelation was exclusive to Paul. True, it is that an administration of the grace of God towards the nations was given to him (Ephesians 3:2), but of the revelation itself Paul says, “it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the power of the Spirit” (Ephesians 3:5). Galatians makes it clear that Paul owed nothing to the twelve but it is equally true that the twelve owed nothing to Paul. Acts 15 seems to bear a similar relation to the assembly that Galatians 2 does to the gospel, and it is remarkable that while Peter says of the nations that God gave them “the Holy Spirit as to us also, and put no difference between us and them” (compare Ephesians 2:11-22), James adds, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18), surely an allusion to the mystery hidden in God from eternity (compare Ephesians 3:9). There was light at Jerusalem and the Spirit in the assembly indicated clearly that as to the ministry of the assembly as well as that of the gospel Paul had not run in vain.

Paul stands out as a wise master-builder. How many Gentile assemblies must have been established by his building (1 Corinthians 3:9-17). But there had been local assemblies before Paul came into the work. Acts 9:31 speaks of assemblies throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria. They were built up and multiplied because Saul ceased to persecute but he had not built them. In fact, Paul says definitely in Galatians 1:22, “But I was unknown personally to the assemblies of Judea which are in Christ; only they were hearing that he who persecuted us formerly now announces the glad tidings of the faith which formerly he ravaged: and they glorified God in me.”

Yet in addressing the Thessalonians Paul writes, “Having received the word of the report of God by us, ye accepted, not men’s word, but, even as it is truly, God’s word... For ye, brethren, have become imitators of the assemblies of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 2:13-14). Paul’s assemblies were of the same pattern as the assemblies of Judea, of the same material, of the same building - assemblies in Christ Jesus. What a marvellous unity. Every local assembly on earth an assembly in Christ Jesus!

Then, too, there is the breaking of bread. How we treasure the thought that Paul received it from the Lord in glory. But it is the same feast which was eaten by the disciples who continued in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship. “I received from the Lord,” says Paul, “that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was delivered up ... said ... This do in remembrance of me”. And they had done it. They had continued in it. Paul shed a flood of light on its meaning, but it was the same feast. There is only one breaking of bread.

This unity magnifies the work of the Holy Spirit. A mere man’s work would have established something new and independent, but it was God’s word, God’s work, and God is one, and His gospel is one and His assembly one.

*A. L. Bloomfield*  
*Goodmayes*

## SECRET PROBLEMS 2 — PERSONAL TRIALS

**“The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy”** (Proverbs 14:10 AV).

There are secret personal trials which are very bitter yet which cannot be shared. Many a person carrying such a sorrow has been seriously misunderstood and this has added to the burden. There are cases of bereavement, consciousness of personal defects, the slight of a dear friend, or it may be the constant trial of a life of loneliness, besides the innumerable secret sorrows of the human heart.

It is a great cheer to know that all these things open a wonderful door to the activities of the grace of Christ — the great High Priest of His people; “In that he himself hath suffered being tempted [tried], he is able to succour them that are tempted [tried]” (Hebrews 2:18). So that we can say, “We have not a high

priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted [tried] like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

The Apostle Paul had a secret trial — a thorn for the flesh — a messenger of Satan to buffet him. He besought the Lord three times that it might depart from him. The Lord said to him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”. What a marvellous result this message had, for he said, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”.

Thus would the Lord Jesus encourage the burdened heart, that if no one in the whole world can share its trial, He is able to lift the heart above it. He says, “Come unto me, all ye that ... are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”. There are heavy-laden believers as well as sinners, and His invitation comes to each with equal force. Thus the secret trial gives a unique opportunity of gaining the experience of the Lord’s personal sympathy and grace if we but come boldly to Him.

While we nurse our trial and brood over it and do not bring it to the Lord, we shall not only keep our burden, but it will grow heavier. We may be encouraged to tell Him all, for:

*“He knows what sorest trials mean,  
For He has felt the same,”*

Even if the sorrow is the direct consequence of our own folly and sin this is no barrier, providing the sin is owned and judged. “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”. Thus the great yet simple solution of our secret trials will be found only in the presence of Jesus, the Son of God, our great High Priest. We need not hesitate to pour into His sympathetic ear even that which cannot be told to any person on earth.

May each learn His ability and His heart to meet every secret trial, and thus gain a deeper secret and personal knowledge of Himself and His love through the sorrow.

*F. S. Marsh*



# THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TESTIMONY IN OUR DAILY OCCUPATION

## Acts 18:1-11

Most of us are quite ordinary people. God has called us in ordinary positions of life and we should remember that the epistle to the Corinthians insists that a person should abide in the same calling in which they have been called. When a person becomes a christian there is usually no need for them to change their employment and circumstances but the whole moral element of life is altered. Hence a man or woman is to abide in their calling with God. "Let each abide in that calling in which he has been called.... Let each, wherein he is called, brethren, therein abide with God" (1 Corinthians 7: 20, 24).

The circumstances of our daily calling seem suggested by what is brought before us in the first few verses of Acts 18. It says, "For they were tent-makers by trade". It is a wonderful thing to be for the Lord in our daily life. Think of the Lord Himself. In Mark 6: 3 He is spoken of as the carpenter. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" Think of the Lord following the ordinary routine of daily life. We may be sure it was as precious incense to God. When the Lord comes forth in public ministry the heaven opens upon Him and God announces His pleasure in the Lord Jesus, and says, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight" (Mark 1:11). In that way God showed His pleasure in those years of obscurity when the Lord was known as the carpenter.

The Lord now gives us the privilege of living for Him in our ordinary daily life. It is there we are to defend the testimony. Every established believer is responsible to defend, by his conduct and character, the testimony that he holds dear. There are one or two scriptures we might turn to in this connection which would throw light on the subject.

The first is 1 Corinthians 7:20-24: "Let each abide in that calling in which he has been called. Hast thou been called being a bondman, let it not concern thee; but and if thou canst become free, use it rather. For the bondman that is called in the Lord is the Lord's freedman; in like manner also the freeman being called is Christ's bondman. Ye have been bought with a price; do not be the bondmen of men. Let each, wherein he is called, brethren, therein abide with God".

The word bondman is really a slave. Even a slave had no need to change his occupation or his circumstances in order to defend the testimony. He was not to

rebel and run away. He might be the slave of a most exacting and hard man but christianity enabled a slave to adorn the doctrine of his Saviour in those same circumstances. The trouble is not usually with our circumstances but with ourselves.

I would make a special appeal as to how we stand in our working life. In a very large part of our life we are engaged in work. We may have to start early in the morning and be home late at night and have very little leisure. You may be employed in a shop, a bank, or your occupation may be a profession of some kind. Whatever it be, God says you are to abide in that calling with Him. We are to go on with our everyday work but there is to be an immense moral change in the way we do it. We are not now to do it with a view to selfish aggrandisement and success. It is easy to do things on that line and be successful but if you do you will fail in the testimony.

Perhaps you have a business of your own and you put all your energies into it and you are very successful. But what about the testimony? It is a very poor thing if you succeed in business and fail as to the testimony. We can count on God's mercy with regard to our everyday life and God does come in remarkably. Yet if you carry on your business as an ordinary man of the world, in what way are you standing for the testimony? We want to have an entirely different outlook in the way we do things. We are to take them up for the Lord.

Many years ago I was working very hard in an office; I was going early and remaining until nearly midnight. It seemed an extraordinary life for a christian to be all those hours dealing with mundane or secular matters, nothing spiritual. But I was cheered by that word to bondmen, "Ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3: 24). After all I was not quite a slave. It enabled me to see that my ordinary daily life could be for Christ. We are all conscious of much failure, alas, but it is indeed a cheer to know that we can "adorn the teaching which is of our Saviour God in all things" (Titus 2: 10).

This is not preaching or teaching; those are for other times. You adorn it as setting it out in its beauty practically. By your manner of life you adorn the teaching. It is very important that we should take home to ourselves the question of standing for the testimony in our daily life. A great deal is said in the epistles as to the conduct of slaves and masters. They are told how to behave relatively, and for the slave there is special encouragement given, for the majority of God's people are found in humble circumstances. "Bondmen, obey in all things your

masters according to flesh; not with eye-services, as men-pleasers, but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatsoever ye do, labour at it heartily, as doing it to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3: 22-24).

Some one remarked that no christian who is servant to an earthly master could receive his full wages from him. They might receive the amount agreed, but they could not receive full wages because, if we have served the Lord Christ in our earthly calling, we are to receive the reward of the inheritance. God is taking note as to whether your work is done for the Lord, “not with eye-services ... but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord”. How interesting our daily life becomes; not eight hours of blank, but every moment serving the Lord in our ordinary daily life. How different the motive; we are to do things in a way that would please Christ.

How encouraging this is, too, for those engaged in ordinary domestic duties, which are in themselves excessively monotonous to some natures. Let us remember that every particle of our life may be taken up for Christ — adorning the teaching of our Saviour God. Our daily occupation is a very important section of our life.

In the passage we read in Acts we find Paul staying with Aquila and Priscilla because he was of the same craft; they were tent-makers. Think of the great apostle working at tent-making! It shows his acceptance of the governmental ordering of God. Aquila and Priscilla had come from Rome. Was it a movement directly ordered of the Lord? No. Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome and these two accepted it as under the government of God and as accepting it they found themselves in the direct line of the testimony. We need to accept the governmental dealings of God in connection with our limitations in circumstances of life and health. As accepting the governmental limitations prescribed by God, we find ourselves in the line of the testimony.

The government of God and the testimony are never at variance. It was under the governmental ordering of God that the Lord Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem! God was behind it all. Do not chafe in your circumstances; they are what God has permitted. God has placed you as you are, and where you are. Your health, your capabilities and your circumstances are His ordering and He would have you adorn the teaching of our Saviour God where you are and you are to abide in your calling, with God. Of course, if I cannot abide there with God I must get out of it. If my calling is not in keeping with the testimony, if it

necessitates the denial of the principles of God's world, I must leave it. But there are very few occupations like that. The providence of God has placed most of us in such positions that we can carry out this injunction, and adorn the teaching of our Saviour God.

In 2 Timothy we find four qualities which should mark us in the sphere of our work. First, "For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of wise discretion" (2 Timothy 1:7). One thing which is greatly needed is courage. In verse 8 the apostle says to Timothy, "Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord". I would say to the young here specially, 'Do not be ashamed. The testimony is such that it need bring no blush to your cheek. We can be ashamed of much in ourselves but we never need be ashamed of the testimony'. Timothy was evidently a diffident, nervous young man, and to encourage him the apostle refers to Onesiphorus. He says, he "has not been ashamed of my chain; but being in Rome sought me out very diligently, and found me" (vv. 16 & 17). We need courage.

Then suffering is referred to, "Take thy share in suffering" (2 Timothy 2:3). We are often timid and are marked by the spirit of fear because we are not prepared to suffer. If we are prepared to suffer as a lamb we shall be as bold as a lion.

Thirdly, there is understanding, "Think of what I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things" (2 Timothy 2:7). We need to know what we are suffering for.

The next thing is devotedness. A good soldier will give up everything to please the Lord. There is a call for devotedness today; nothing else will meet the situation. An insipid lukewarmness has come over many and devotedness is necessary if we are to be for the Lord and to stand for the testimony.

Let us apply these four qualities.

*Malcolm Biggs*

*Extract from an address at Basingstoke, August 1929.*