

***No. 57***

# *Living Water*

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## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS—CHAPTER 12

### (Highlights of a Bible reading)

In this chapter the apostle appeals to the Romans “by the compassions of God”. Evidently he felt that it would have leverage in the souls of the believers there. He did not appeal to them by the majesty or the rights of God but by the goodness that God had shown to those who did not deserve it. It refers back in a sense to “that he might shew mercy to all” (Romans 11:32) and to chapter 2:4 where we read that “the goodness of God leads thee to repentance”. You can write across the first eight chapters of this epistle “the compassions of God” and the question arises, ‘What effect have these great gospel truths had upon any of us?’ That is to be a practical help as we face up to the demands, and they are demands, of this chapter. We know what the mercy of God is and that should call forth a response.

We give our hearts to the Lord when we are converted but to give our bodies is a very real test of our discipleship. The believer’s body is the temple of God so we are to present it as a living sacrifice. We are to take care of our bodies and not allow in them what is unholy. We are to continue to present our bodies holy before the Lord. This is described as our “intelligent service” which means that we understand what we are doing and indeed are glad to do it for Christ’s sake.

If we look at ourselves on this line we may find much to discourage us but if we look at scripture it is full of those who in greater or lesser degree have taken this on at a cost. Men such as Moses or Samuel and the woman who cast the two mites into the treasury (see Mark 12:42), each, in their different way, exemplify this. Supremely, of course, it was seen in the Lord Himself.

It is what scripture speaks of as the “new man”, indwelt by the Spirit of God, that responds to this appeal based on the compassions of God. We could by nature accept the best that God offers and want to leave it at that but where the soul has truly been affected by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit there is a desire to respond. Isaiah illustrates this kind of committal when he “heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” and he responded by saying: “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). We can be very thankful that this call to committal is linked to God’s love for us. It is God who has loved us so overwhelmingly

and then the Spirit of God has shed abroad the love of God in our hearts and that is to act as a lever in the soul.

It is also a comfort to all of us that this committal can have small beginnings. In this chapter there are some exhortations to things that most of us could well seek to fill out. A man like Stephen is taken up first to serve in a very practical way in distributing food to needy persons. The spirit in which he did it led him on to greater service and his body was finally found completely on the altar. There was public witness that this was so. Full committal is what is called for but there are some quite simple things that will help us on the way.

Then we need to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind”. Paul speaks of this in the epistle to the Ephesians: “ye have not thus learnt the Christ, if ye have heard him and been instructed in him according as the truth is in Jesus; namely your having put off according to the former conversation the old man ... and being renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:20-23). It is very much a question of the whole man, the mind and the body.

We need to have our minds open to what the Lord is saying. There is a course of instruction received from the Lord (if we will receive it) which helps us in these things. The renewed mind is the mind that we read of in Philippians 2: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (vv.6-8). It is the mind to go down.

In a sense the renewing of the mind is the active work of the Spirit but we do also need some instruction about it. If it all just happened spontaneously we would not need chapters like this. We need to pray to the Holy Spirit for help and instruction and that He might fill us with Christ. Also, we need His help that we might be kept from certain natural tendencies which we all suffer from and which would lead us away from this line of things. The great service of the Spirit of God is to occupy us with Christ. Ephesians speaks of hearing Him and being instructed (Ephesians 4:21); that means that we have got to make time to hear His instruction. The result is that we will each for

ourselves get a deeper impression of the glory of Christ, our love for Him will be strengthened and there will be this change with us.

Paul continues in verse three of our chapter: “For I say, through the grace which has been given to me, to every one that is among you, not to have high thoughts above what he should think; but to think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith”. There was a very blessed evidence of the work of God in the apostle’s soul in the way that he puts this: “through the grace which has been given to me”. By nature he was a man given to having high thoughts of himself but he appeals to others not to be marked by that same thing and he goes out of his way to say, ‘It is with grace that I make this appeal’.

If we are to contribute to the life of the “one body” (see v.5) on the lines that this chapter sets out, we ought to have some idea of what contribution we can make. Interestingly, Paul is touching on the danger of thinking we can make a bigger contribution than we actually are capable of; as he says, “not to have high thoughts above what he should think; but to think so as to be wise, as God has dealt to each a measure of faith”. We have to see what our measure is. God may graciously increase it but we are to work with what we have. This chapter is to encourage the spirit of contribution. It would be a great pity if anyone of us were to go through this chapter and conclude that there was nothing that they could contribute.

The chapter may well awaken desire with us and turn us to the Lord, that we might have more capacity to take up some of the exhortations. Some of the things mentioned — teaching, service and prophecy — are distinctive to particular individuals but other things — “he that gives, in simplicity... Let love be unfeigned; abhorring evil ...” — should mark us all. It would be a very sad thing, for instance, if we did not find verses 10 and 11 active in a company like this. (“...as to brotherly love, kindly affectioned towards one another: as to honour, each taking the lead in paying it to the other: as to diligent zealously, not slothful; in spirit fervent; serving the Lord.”)

All these requirements take on a special character as they are done as serving the Lord. We may not feel like doing some of them; sometimes we may not feel very merciful or brotherly but, when we remember who has called us and the One we are serving, it gives it a real character to our activity.

*Based on a Bible reading at Bromley, Kent, March 2002.*

## WHAT IS DISTINCT

**“And they read in the law of God distinctly out of the book, and gave the sense...”**

Nehemiah 7:73 – 8:3, 8:8

**“Then he laid his hands again upon his eyes, and he saw distinctly...”**

Mark 8:22-26

**“But if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master...”**

Exodus 21:1-6

I want to speak about hearing distinctly, seeing distinctly, and speaking distinctly. Much in the world around us is not distinct. We see politicians who say one thing and mean another; I work in finance and people think that the accountancy regulations are distinct enough and yet companies find grey areas and loopholes. Even in religious circles there are senior churchmen who are not prepared to speak out for what the Bible says is true; they are indistinct.

There is a blessing for us if we are able to hold onto things that are distinct. At the beginning of the Bible it says that, “God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Then we see that God distinguishes between light and darkness, between dry land and sea. God brings in order; He brings in things that are distinct. We come to the New Testament and we find Paul writing to Timothy that things might be done with order in the assembly. Then we come to John writing in his letters; he is very distinct in the things that he writes. He writes of love and hate, of light and darkness. There are things that we can take account of that are distinct and it will be a blessing to us.

You may remember that Isaiah prophesied and it was a prophecy that the Lord Jesus repeated when He was here. He was speaking to the Jews and He says to them that “in them is filled up the prophecy of Esaias, which says, Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and beholding ye shall behold and not see; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and they have heard heavily with their ears, and they have closed their eyes as asleep, lest they should see with the eyes, and hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear” (Matthew 13:14 - 16). There is a blessing for us if our eyes see and if our ears hear. Let us not fall into the trap that Israel was in; their hearts were heavy. The Lord Jesus said, “of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). So

I believe that, even if in perhaps only a limited way, we can speak distinctly as we see and as we hear distinctly.

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In Nehemiah, where we read, we have the thought of people hearing with understanding. You may recall that Nehemiah's time was a time of restoration. The children of Israel had sinned and they had been taken to Babylon but a time came when Ezra and others were able to bring them back into the land. Ezra establishes the temple and the law and Nehemiah built the walls of Jerusalem, introducing protection. There is an interesting spontaneity here. It is not that Ezra calls the people together; it says that God gathered them. "And when the seventh month came, and the children of Israel were in their cities, all the people gathered together as one man to the open place that was before the water-gate; and they spoke to Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded Israel". There is the spontaneous desire to have the law re-established. In a similar way today there is a desire amongst believers that things might be restored. There is a desire that truths and doctrines that our fathers enjoyed before us might be freshly enjoyed, that those things might not be just words to us but that they might be really worked out in our lives. So the people come, gathered by God. They come together spontaneously. It is men, women, all that could hear with understanding. Then it says, "that they read in the law distinctly, out of the book, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading".

Gave the sense! Caused them to understand! God wants us to understand. God does not make things complicated so that we might not understand. Remember what the Lord Jesus said, "I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes" (Luke 10:21). They have been revealed to people like you and me. What a wonderful blessing!

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Where we read in Mark, we have a blind man. I am sure that a lot has been said as to why, when the Lord first touched him, he did not see distinctly and then the Lord touches him again and he sees distinctly. It is the Lord's thought that we should see distinctly. As Paul writes to Timothy, "our Saviour



God, who desires that all men should be saved” and then he goes on, “and come to the knowledge of the truth”. God has wonderful blessings for us but they do not end with the forgiveness of our sins. They start there! God wants us to be established. There is a hymn that says:

*‘Peace, sonship, joy, the Holy Spirit given...’*

Those are some of the things that God blesses us with. We should allow the Holy Spirit who dwells in us to influence our lives so that we might come to the knowledge of the truth. God will give us understanding, just as those people in Nehemiah had an understanding of the law.

The man we are told of in Mark does not see distinctly at first. When Jesus asks him what he saw, we read, “And having looked up, he said, I behold men, for I see them, as trees, walking”. If we have a wrong estimation of man then we do not see things distinctly. I have been reading about Isaac in Genesis. He was a great man, one of the patriarchs, but when the time comes for him to bless his sons the Bible says that “his eyes were heavy”. You will remember that Jacob deceives Isaac at that point; he makes out that he is Esau and Isaac is taken in. Why was Isaac taken in? The Bible provides the answer: “Isaac loved Esau, because venison was to his taste” (Genesis 25:28). Isaac had a taste for natural things and Esau answered to that. Esau was attractive according to the flesh and we would think that Jacob was not very straightforward. But the scripture says of them that, “Esau despised the birthright” (Genesis 25:34). Jacob desired that birthright and God honoured him for that. Isaac did not have the estimation of his sons that God had.

It is interesting that Rebecca, even before the sons were born, when “the children struggled together within her”, went to enquire of God and God told her then, “the elder shall serve the younger” ( Genesis 25:23). Rebecca understood that and Isaac did not. Because of that he had a wrong estimation of man in that he let his taste for natural things influence him.

When Jacob came to bless, at the end of his life, his eyes are heavy too. Joseph brings his two sons and Jacob goes to bless the boys, laying his right hand on Ephraim’s head, even though he was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh who was older. Joseph interjects, saying, ‘No, you have them the wrong way round’ but Jacob was not influenced. Jacob knew God’s

thoughts which were that Ephraim should be the greater. There was a blessing for Manasseh too, but Ephraim should be the greater (see Genesis 48:8-20).

I think it is wonderful that in his last days, although his eyes were heavy, spiritually Jacob's eyes were bright and he could bless Ephraim and Manasseh according to God's thoughts. Then, as recorded in Genesis chapter 49, he could look forward and see what God had in mind for all the different tribes that would make up the nation of Israel. What spiritual perception Jacob had because of the history he had with God. Jacob had to face up to many things in his life, but he was brought to see things as God saw them.

The Lord Jesus warned us that we might be afraid of men. "But I say to you, my friends, Fear not those who kill the body and after this have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom ye shall fear: Fear him who after he has killed has authority to cast into hell" (Luke 12:4, 5). I know what it is to be fearful. The Lord Jesus would challenge us as to whether we are fearful to confess Him before men. The scripture tells us that we are not to fear man but rather we are to confess the Lord Jesus.

There is another aspect to this matter of seeing men in a distorted way. Sometimes we can be influenced unduly by those who we may recognise as spiritual leaders. Paul writing to the Corinthians says, "For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos... Who then is Apollos, and who Paul? Ministering servants, through whom ye have believed, and as the Lord has given to each" (1 Corinthians 3:4, 5). They are servants and we are not to give them a place that is out of proportion, though we are to remember also the word from Paul to Timothy that, "the elders who take the lead...well" among the saints are to "be esteemed worthy of double honour" (1 Timothy 5:17).

Peter on the mount of transfiguration was overwhelmed by the wonder of what he saw; there were Moses and Elias, appearing in glory, and speaking with the Lord. Peter gets Moses and Elias out of proportion in his thoughts. He says, "Let us build three tabernacles (one for the Lord and one for Moses and one for Elias). Immediately God comes in. "While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight: hear him." And it says that they fell upon their faces in fear, but when they looked up "they saw no one but Jesus alone." (Matthew 17:5 - 8). God would fix our eyes on Jesus. When

we see “Jesus alone” everyone else is taken out of the way, including self. What a wonderful blessing to have God’s estimation of man.

The man that is most likely to get in the way of the Lord is the one that you see in the mirror, yourself. What a hindrance our own self-importance and self-opinionatedness are to coming to an understanding of God’s ways. We see an example of it in the story of Naaman. Naaman was told by the prophet that he would be cured of his leprosy if he went and plunged seven times in the Jordan. When he heard that he rejected the idea and it says that “he went away in a rage”. If he had gone on in that way he would never have got the blessing. In the mercy of God, some of his servants reasoned with him and persuaded him to do what the prophet had said. It is a great thing to have friends who make you realise that God’s ways are simple and that we need to humble ourselves. That is the only answer, really, to self, to humble ourselves, to go down. It says of Naaman, “Then he went down”. Naaman plunged seven times in the Jordan and he came out and he got the blessing.

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In Exodus 21 we have the thought of speaking distinctly. We read, “But if the bondman shall say distinctly, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go free ...”. It is a picture of the committal of the Lord Jesus. How distinctly the Lord Jesus spoke. He said, “The cup which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?”

Everything He said was distinct. He spoke of heaven and about hell. He spoke about the kingdom to come. He spoke of death and also of resurrection. People wondered when He spoke for they had never heard these things spoken of in the way that He did. He spoke with authority. He said, “Ye have heard that it has been said, Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say unto you... Again, ye have heard that it has been said to the ancients, ... But I say unto you” (Matthew 5:33,... 39). The Lord Jesus spoke in a distinctive way. How compassionate He was to those who were sorrowing. How straight He was. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” (Matthew 23:15). He could speak to the dead and call them forth. Think of His prayers to His Father. How distinct in every way the speaking of the Lord Jesus was.

Yet the overriding thing that made what the Lord Jesus said distinct was the fact that He was consistent with what He said. When people asked Him,

“Who art thou?” the Lord’s reply was “Altogether that which I also say to you” (John 8:25). What a challenge that is to each one of us. How consistent are we with what we say?

Here, we have the thought particularly of distinction in relation to service. Why was the bondman to speak distinctly? It was so that there should be no misunderstanding about what was intended. The bondman was committing himself not to go out free! How distinct was what Jesus did in going to the cross!

The matter was not to rest just on what the bondman said. His master was to bring him before the judges, “and shall bring him to the door, or to the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl”. That is, there was consistency in that action with what the bondman had said. With the Lord Jesus we see the most wonderful consistency between what He said and what He did. In the garden of Gethsemane He said, “not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). Then on the cross He laid down His life. He would not go out free. He loved His master, He loved the Father. He loved His wife; Christ loved the church and delivered Himself up for it. He loved His children. We are His children: all those who have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour belong to Him. What a wonderful blessing we have been brought into.

The challenge comes to us as to whether we can each speak distinctly in relation to service to the Lord. In Isaiah chapter 50 there is that wonderful prophetic reference to the Lord. It brings in the thought of speaking and hearing: “The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed” (Isaiah 50:4). How was it that the Lord Jesus had the tongue of the instructed? Because He heard, morning by morning. In this wonderful way we see the Lord Jesus hearing, day by day. Is there a desire with us to hear, day by day, so that we might have the tongue of the instructed, so that, in measure, we might be able to succour by a word him that is weary?

Paul, speaking of his own ministry, said that he had authority for building up and not for throwing down (2 Corinthians 10:8). That was part of his apostolic authority, but I believe the spirit of it should be with us today. The things we

say should be for the building up and not for throwing down the people of God. Then, how many do we come across that are weary? People that are burdened with sin. People that are burdened with their circumstances, ill health, sorrows, with burdens of the way. The Lord Jesus could succour by a word. What can we do? Have we heard, have we seen something that we, too, might succour by a word him that is weary? How many there are whose knees are weak, whose arms are hanging down. Can we say something of the Lord Jesus to succour and encourage them?

It does not mean that you do not speak straight to them. There are times when it is necessary to do so. There are times also when it is right to encourage. What is so important is the spirit in which it is done. I remember reading an interesting comment about Solomon. Solomon wrote three books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. In Proverbs you get the thought of what is right, the right thing to say. In the Ecclesiastes you get the right time to say it and in the Song of Songs the spirit in which it is to be said, which is the spirit of love. Do we have that spirit of love in what we say? Can we succour by a word him that is weary?

Then, too, there is the thought of edifying the church. It is interesting that the thought of speaking distinctly is brought in in 1 Corinthians 14 where Paul says that five words with the understanding are better than ten thousand in a tongue. Paul adds that when someone speaks in a tongue, no one gets the benefit of it unless someone interpret. (Perhaps even the speaker does not get the benefit.) But if one prophesies, then he can communicate the mind of God for the present time and the whole company will be edified. It is distinct. That is a challenge to all of us, I believe. If the church is to be edified there is to be that which is distinct.

We can see the pattern of everything in the Lord Jesus. How distinct He was in His speaking. He said distinctly "I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free". The Lord Jesus is One who is so consistent. The Lord Jesus is One who brought in blessing. May we be helped in hearing distinctly and seeing distinctly, and in the measure in which we do those things, may we speak distinctly that we may be a help to one another. May there be a blessing for each one of us for His name's sake. Amen.

*Peter Wallach*

*An address at St. Anne's, October 2002*

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS

The precious blood of Jesus,  
Once shed upon the tree,  
Has purged my guilty conscience  
And brought me liberty.

The precious blood of Jesus,  
The ground of all my peace,  
Has satisfied God's justice,  
And given my soul release.

The precious blood of Jesus  
Blest proof of grace divine.  
Love could not bear the distance  
Between His heart and mine.

The precious blood of Jesus,  
The deep foundation laid  
When He, to death delivered,  
Complete redemption made.

The precious blood of Jesus  
God's righteousness proclaims.  
In Him He justifies me,  
And not a spot remains.

The precious blood of Jesus,  
Son of the Father's love!  
Thy death my theme for ever  
Now, and in heaven above.

*Jethro Jay (1878 - 1945)*

## **EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS**

The Lord of Glory crucified,  
On either side a thief,  
Reckoned amongst the lawless ones —  
Still perfect in His grief.

Though spoken to insultingly,  
Reviled by passers by,  
Made game of by the soldiers crude,  
He bowed His head to die.

Never so kingly was that King,  
As, mocked with thorny crown,  
With spirit meek, in matchless love,  
His life He there laid down.

Fathomless were His sufferings deep,  
Measureless were His woes.  
Hated, rejected, set at nought,  
Yet, dying for His foes!

*G.M.H. (1954)*

## **FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT**

This is an account of an experience that I had when sharing the message of the gospel. On 16<sup>th</sup> September I met a lady who was suffering from AIDS. She does not want her name disclosed, so I will refer to her as Mercy.

Mercy related her story to me. Her husband was a timber contractor who died of AIDS about a year ago. Mercy assured me that she had been faithful to her husband during their fifteen year marriage but he had admitted his unfaithfulness about three months before he died.

Mercy continued her story:- “My husband is now dead. I am going to die soon. Who will take care of my three children?” The awfulness of her plight caused her to burst into tears.

I tried to console her and told her of the hope that she could find in Christ, through His death and resurrection. I told her of the promise:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

I spoke of this and then prayed with her. She then asked me to continue to pray for her and assured me that she had trusted in Christ. Mercy told me that even though she knows that death is near her hope was to meet Christ in heaven.

We need to continue to pray for Mercy and many others in Africa who find themselves afflicted with AIDS and are in despair.

*George Adu  
Ghana.*

## **GOING WEST!**

‘I was so ill I nearly went west recently,’ remarked a middle-aged gentleman to a neighbour, with whom was standing a christian young man, unknown to him.

‘Oh no!’ promptly remarked the young man, ‘if you had died in your sins, you would not have gone west; you would have gone down, but if you had died as one that had trusted in the precious blood of Jesus and His finished work, you would have gone up!’

Reader, do not lightly regard the ravages of death and do not flippantly speak of the solemn end as ‘Going west’. Some have come to the end of their careless and godless lives and had to own that for them everything was dark, and that they were going out into the dark, as dying in their sins — a prospect too awful to contemplate. Now is the time soberly to consider the issues of eternity, for, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”, and your state at death will fix your destiny for eternity. If you die in your sins, these are the words of the Lord Jesus, “where I go ye cannot come”.



The rich man in hell, his dreadful condition exposed to us by the Lord Jesus Himself (see Luke 16:19 to end), does not ask for his doom to be altered but only that his torment may be relieved. His state was fixed. He had not gone west; he had gone down and would stay there for all eternity. Contrast this with the homegoing of Stephen (see Acts 7:54 to end). "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God". He then prays: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," plainly indicating which way he knew he was to go.

Which way are you to go? You cannot afford to ignore the question. To be in ignorance and remain in ignorance is folly of the very worst form. You may lose your own soul, for delay may prove fatal, and I would urge upon you to accept that which God views with such infinite delight, the finished work of His Son. It is on that ground, and your acceptance of it, that you are assured not only of the certainty of going up to Him, but of being for ever with Him, in all the enjoyment of that realm of bliss and blessedness, which His precious death has secured for the believer for ever.

*J. Gordon Matheson.*

### **EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY — 1929**

September 30th. We read Jonah to-day and saw the education of a servant and what it involves. Jonah was deficient in three things:

confidence in God,  
obedience, and  
the spirit of grace.

This springs from indefiniteness and indefiniteness from lack of liberty with God. The measure of my approach to God is my measure in approach to men. If Jonah had been accustomed to intimate dealings with God, he would have been definite, committed and ready to act without hesitation. What marks Jonah all through is his lack of prayer and I cannot prophesy in the Spirit of Christ, however great my gift, if I do not pray. Paul desired to be marked by a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and he seeks the

prayers even of others. If I do not give up all the keys to God, I have always an outlet for myself and, as Jonah did, pay my fare away from God's path for me. This is a very dangerous position for a servant of God. If I yield all my reserves, I have no other way to go, however much I need to be strengthened, and I have no money to pay my fare on a wrong course. May the Lord give us to be warned by Jonah's shortcomings and to turn to Him, who only is perfect, and learn to witness to God and His testimony.

*Robert Dunn*

## **THE WORK OF CHRIST**

### **(Extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday)**

When Adam sinned he fell under the judgment of death...Nothing can relieve this judgment but substitution. The judgment must be borne; the righteousness of God requires it. Man, who is under it, cannot be relieved of it but by another bearing it. It cannot be cancelled or overlooked. Righteousness demands judgment, and if man falls under it he cannot, or could not rise out of it; and if God recovered him out of it He would compromise the righteousness of His own sentence. Man cannot in righteousness be exonerated but by one not chargeable with his guilt bearing the judgment of it. This Christ did on the cross. He was "made sin for us...that we might become the righteousness of God in him".

*J. B. Stoney (9:98)*

As I am awakened to my distance from God and the fear of judgment, I find relief only in Him who went down into death for me and bore the judgment of my sins in His own body on the tree. He is the ransom. He died for our sins. I cannot be relieved of the burden and judgment of my sins but through Him who gave Himself for me. Through His death only can I get remission of my sins. By Him, "All that believe are justified from all things".

*J. B. Stoney (10:236)*

By the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, God annulled in grace the distance which sin had brought in between Himself and man, in order that all things might, through Christ, be presented agreeably to Himself. Believers are already reconciled, through Christ's death to be presented holy, unblamable, and irreproachable — a new creation. God was in Christ, when

Christ was on earth, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses; but now the love of God had been fully revealed in the cross, the testimony has gone out world wide, beseeching men to be reconciled to God! The end is that God may have His pleasure in man.

*Morrish Concise Bible Dictionary page 652*

We have the positive declaration that this robber, taken up for his crimes, was that day absolutely fit for paradise; so perfect is the work of Christ. Observe this robber, and the woman that was a sinner, how they understand Christ because they want a saviour. When I come to God with Christ in my hand (like Abel with his lamb), God says to me, 'You are righteous'. By faith I see Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the majesty on high. When did He go there? When He had by Himself purged our sins. I see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the witness of a salvation accomplished. The glory is in the face of the One who bore my sins.

*J. N. Darby (21:93)*

Christianity is the revelation of God and eternal life in the Person of Christ. It professes another truth, that is, atonement, or expiation of sin. It does not teach a goodness of God which can bear with any sin, but maintains the perfect holiness of God, and the putting away of sin, but it does it in a way which equally maintains infinite and perfect love.

*J. N. Darby (33:79)*

Christ met all that was needed when He came into the world; sin was there, and He was "made sin"; death was there and He died; judgment and condemnation were outstanding against man, and Christ drank that dreadful cup, so that God has anticipated the day of judgment at the cross.

*J. N. Darby "Notes & Jottings" Part 1 Page 25*

"God having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). It was, "His own Son" who was sent into the place of sin's condemnation. The utter destruction of the world and all its inhabitants would not have been such a solemn and impressive testimony as that. For it was the righteous and holy One who was forsaken and who bore the judgment. God has condemned sin in the flesh in the most solemn and public way. Now the order of man which dishonoured Him — the man characterised by sin — is no longer before Him. Another Man is before God who has glorified Him in bearing sin's condemnation and every creature under heaven can be blessed in that Man.

*Charles A. Coates "Outline of Leviticus" page 205*

The Lord on the cross bore our sins. He was alive then, but having borne it, He dies; and that was necessary for atonement. The life had to be given up, the life to which sin had been attached on the cross. During the three hours of the forsaking, sin was attached to Him. I mean our sins, and in order for atonement to be accomplished that life had to be given up. Hence He died and that order of man is ended. The necessity for His dying is important. One might have thought if He had passed through the three hours of darkness and the judgment of God there was no necessity for dying. But, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission", that is, the life to which sin attached had to be given up, and He gives it up and never takes it up again. He takes life in a new condition.

*James Taylor (5:438)*

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" You could not say there was any conscious link with God there. He was completely forsaken, and this cannot be emphasised too much... There was total abandonment, otherwise there could not be a true dealing with sin. At our best, none of us judges sin rightly. The idea in atonement is that sin was measured not only by man, but by God. On the cross the Lord fully measured sin according to what it is in God's account; we could never do that.

*James Taylor (5:436)*

References:

References given so that any extract may be considered in its context if desired, unless otherwise stated, relate to the "New Series" Editions of the ministry of the individuals named. All of the material above is Published by the Kingston Bible Trust, Wembley Avenue, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 9LX UK. The first reference is expressed therefore as '9:98' i.e the extract is taken from the "Ministry of J.B.Stoney" (New Series) Volume 9 page 98

## **WHEN WE PRAY**

### **Matthew 6:9-14**

The Lord says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name". Whatever we are going to ask for, we begin with "Our Father which art in heaven". The consideration of His name will greatly regulate what we pray for. We want the Father's name to

stand out as sanctified from all other names: we want to begin at the top. In the prayer meeting is there nothing to ask of the Father in the heavens that His name might be sanctified? Think of the greatness of heaven, and then of the Father's name. Think of the intensity of His interest in man; think of all His interests vested in the church here. We want that name made great. Then follows, "Thy kingdom come". Everyone will be searched if we think of "Thy kingdom come". How is it to come, if not in us? "Thy kingdom come, let thy will be done as in heaven, so upon earth." It is a searching prayer — first, that the Father's name might be made great, then that we might be in order, as subject under the hand of the Lord. If the prosperity of the kingdom is to be promoted, it must be promoted through His people.

"Thy will be done as in earth as it is in heaven." How long earth and heaven have been divorced, and how the heart of God has grieved over it! Now there is a place where heaven and earth are brought together. It is in the church, which is the house of God, the gate of heaven, where the divorced conditions no longer exist, but where God and His pleasure hold sway.

"Give us this day our daily bread." How simple the matters of life become after this! Do you think that God forgets His people, or that He will not satisfy them with bread, both spiritually and literally? Satan sought to turn the Lord on this point, but He had come here to do the will of God. He was forty days without anything. We have never been forty days without food. Afterwards He hungered. "If thou be Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves of bread", said the tempter. He knew that the Lord had only to speak, but His answer is: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth". All the bread in the world will never keep us alive spiritually and we become lawless apart from "every word which goes out from God's mouth".

So that is the order — first, that the Father's name be sanctified, then for His kingdom, after that for our matters and then for forgiveness; "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us". If we have been offended, let us forgive. We shall need forgiveness sooner or later if the Lord sees fit to leave us here. James says, "for we all often offend"

(James 3:2). We are inclined to say ‘It must be put right’, but the ‘must’ is ‘It must be forgiven’.

Then “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”. That is an important part of our prayer. It comes right down to all the conditions of life: whether our business, the children at school, whether it is going to this place or that, or whether it is taking up anything in relation to the Lord’s interests. We still need this prayer that we might be delivered from temptation, that we might not be put in a place too difficult for us. The Lord knows our spiritual stature and our requests are to be in accord with the stature which He knows.

*A. M. Hayward*

*Edited extract from an address in Melbourne, 1935.*

## THE JOURNEY OF A SOUL

There is a passage which a soul has to take in the things of God. It is a moral and spiritual passage and therefore not what can be seen yet it is very real. It may be spoken of in different ways; it may be spoken of as the passage from the world to the Father, from Adam to Christ, or from the flesh to the Spirit. It may be looked at in these different ways — as from the world, Adam, or the flesh; but these are all bound up together as one as also the Father, Christ, and the Spirit.

Faith may apprehend God’s mind but cannot go beyond that. People remain where they are, but for progress the passage must be taken, and the point in christianity is that the passage may be taken now. It is a passage, as I have said, which the soul takes from the world to the Father, from Adam to Christ and from flesh to the Spirit.

*F. E. Raven*

**“Love not the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 John 2:15-16).**

**“For as in the Adam all die, thus also in the Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).**

**“...for if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8:13).**

**“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh...” (Galatians 5:17).**

## **FALLING ON OUR FACES**

**Then Jesus comes with them to a place called Gethsemane, and says to the disciples, Sit here until I go away and pray yonder. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and deeply depressed. Then he says to them, My soul is very sorrowful even unto death; remain here and watch with me. And going forward a little he fell upon his face, praying and saying, My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but not as I will, but as thou wilt.**

**Again going away a second time he prayed saying, My Father, if this cannot pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done. And coming he found them again sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. (Matthew 26:36-39. 42-44)**

I want to refer to this solemn passage which describes a little of what happened to Jesus in Gethsemane. I have selected this account in Matthew because it speaks of Jesus falling upon His face under deep pressure. If pressure was ever felt, it was there in Gethsemane, pressure beyond all human tongue to describe even and beyond the human mind to compass. The Spirit gives us a brief glimpse that is sufficient to bring home to us the immensity of what Jesus was entering upon. The word ‘Gethsemane’ has the same root as wine-press, so even that is used by the Spirit to clothe the scene with a kind of mantle that is suited to the occasion.

I draw your attention to this most solemn of all scenes that has ever occurred on earth. When in the anticipation of carrying out the will of God, in solving the great matter of good and evil, one Man alone, in the presence of His Father, anticipates the gravity and the unfathomable depth of that which He, in Person, in body, soul and spirit, was about to endure at the cross.

We are so fickle. We live in days of synthetics; even in material things it is difficult to find something that is real. Things are so imitative; there is an unreality about everything: clothes, food, and our surroundings, but Gethsemane is real.

I want all here to come into this matter because even the younger ones are involved in this dreadful matter of sin. There is only One Person who has ever been able to do anything in relation to your need as having sin in you and in relation to the sins you have committed. If you have trusted on the Saviour, and His work, your sins were taken up in this little scene which we are contemplating. Jesus gets as far as Gethsemane with His disciples and then He selected three of them to go with Him and then He went on a little further. Those three selected to be with Him should have been witnesses of what Jesus Christ was doing. Alas, they are not. They slept in the scene of glory on the mount of transfiguration and they slept in Gethsemane in sorrow. The incapacity of the best of mankind to sustain or even to be an onlooker in the matter of the solution of good and evil is brought out here in its stark nakedness. Peter, that fervent and devoted lover of Christ, went to sleep! Ah, the Lord was not harsh with him because as the hymn puts it: *'None could follow there, blest Saviour'*.

Sin has put its tentacles like an octopus upon everything that is in the world. It has intruded into the most sacred relationships that God has given to His creature. It has put its dead hand upon those relationships and spoiled them. It has intruded into young lives, it has sorrowed aged lives; it has gone into business, education, and science. There is nothing in the world that has not got stamped upon it sin, sin, sin!. Worse than that, it has invaded that which has professed the name of God. I believe, if we want to see sin in its darkest character, it is in that which exists in the realm of that which professes the name of God.

I would encourage believers to read the book of Leviticus and to see the way that the Spirit of God has described the activities of sin as affecting all God's people. It affects the universe, of course. The great day of atonement in Leviticus 16 affects not only men but things and the universe. Let us read the book through carefully, because it was not just sin as relating to men as sinners that makes a stain which only Christ's blood can meet, but there is sin in that which professes the name of God. The Spirit of God introduces this in the book of Leviticus. "If a soul shall sin through



inadvertence against any of the commandments of Jehovah in things that ought not to be done and do any of them; if the priest that is anointed sin ... if the whole assembly of Israel sin ... When a prince sinneth ... if any one of the people of the land sin” (Leviticus 4:2, 3, 13, 22, 27). I love that expression: ‘If anyone of the people of the land’. If I was writing that, having spoken about the priest and the assembly and the prince, I would have said ‘if one of the common people sin’ but the Spirit of God keeps a dignity on God’s people even when He is speaking of sin and calls them “the people of the land”.

Maybe there is here today an errant believer who has sunk far away from what they ought to be. I would like to remind you that the Lord has never relinquished the thought that you are “one of the people of the land”. Though in practice you have disgraced His name, God associates you with the realm of His pleasure.

That is how God looks at you!

That only underlines and makes the sin more glaring. It is bad enough for an unregenerate sinner to do something wrong, but when a believer, one of the people of the land, transgresses sin is underlined, it is ringed around. I had a schoolmaster who had a very soft black pencil and when things were wrong he would underline them with a thick line. If it was very wrong he would put rings around it. The Spirit of God would show the gravity of what sin is when it is manifested in the choicest circumstances that existed in Israel and alas, we hang our heads, do we not; it has existed in the public profession of the house of God of which we are a part.

This was in the mind of Jesus in Gethsemane. How did it affect Jesus? Did He shrug His shoulders and treat it lightly as we do? There was no artificiality with Jesus. He did not just show a brave face and brazen it out. No, not at all! “Going forward a little he fell upon his face”. Think of it; the Spirit of God has told us some of the words of Jesus, that He was deeply grieved and sorrowful. The Man who had been full of the countenance of His Father was now full of grief! Why? On account of sin, sin in all its extensiveness. It brought the Saviour down on His face before His Father in the anticipation of doing His will to provide a sacrifice, to make an expiation, so that all this might be dealt with according to the glory of God. He says, “My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me”. Oh the

heinousness of what sin was to the heart and soul of Jesus! “If it be possible ... but not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Then the second time, the matter is more intense than ever. “My Father, if this cannot pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done”. There is perfect acceptance on the part of Jesus. This is a scene which ought to bring home to us the horribleness of what licence and lawlessness and sin means.

Well now, let us take a view of Jesus, look at Him in action. He fell upon His face. May we draw something from Him of the right feelings of abhorrence of the dreadfulness of sin. But He did not stay there. Feeling it is one thing and doing something about it is another altogether. Had Jesus just remained there as feeling the shame that had come upon God’s people and upon God’s creation there it would remain. But Jesus, in going through this, went forward from Gethsemane steadfastly to the cross in order to provide a holy and a righteous means whereby a full solution of all this could be made. Now, I believe the lead that Jesus gave in this is to be reproduced in souls who themselves had passed through deep exercises of soul. Let me illustrate what I mean from incidents in the gospels.

In Luke 5 the Lord gave to Simon Peter and those with Him a remarkable catch of fishes and in doing so demonstrated the overabounding goodness of God. We are then told that Peter fell down at Jesus’ knees. Why did he fall down? It was not because of the haul of fishes, though that started him in a way. He fell down because there had been secret soul history with Peter that suddenly came to light then. There may be secret exercises with persons that may come to light tonight. They came to light with Peter; he says, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord” (Luke 5:8)! Who told him he was a sinful man? It was the presence there of One who shone in blessedness and goodness that brought home to Peter how sinful he was. He fell down at Jesus’ knees. Peter had found One who had the answer to his sinfulness; he had come to One in whom he could confide.

I wonder if there is anyone here today who has been trying to find an answer to their sinful condition and their sins by ritual, by self-abnegation or by any other means. Give it up today and let open up the gates of your heart to Christ. Fall down before Him!

Now, another illustration in order to show what Peter was arriving at and what we need to arrive at. In Luke 5 we read of a man full of leprosy. Have

we ever put ourselves in the picture of this man who was full of leprosy, who seeing Jesus fell down before Him. Oh, would that we could be deeper in our soul exercises!

I knew a christian woman who lived in Gloucestershire. She told me that when she was first concerned about her sins she did not sleep or change her clothes for a week. She was in such distress. She was conscious of being a hell-deserving sinner and she could find no way out until she fell down in the presence of the only Saviour! I would that the young people could get a little bit of spiritual depth in their soul by realising how deep-dyed they are in their sinnership. And there is no other way out! There is only one way of relief — it is to come to Christ.

The leper fell down before Him. Well may we do so! We have not a shred of moral worth in ourselves. We are like the leper that was full of leprosy. Man in all his parts — the mind, thoughts, the eyes, mouth, ears, tongue, feet, and hands — they are all steeped in sin. They all become the means of the expression of sin. Oh, to fall down before Him, just as we are, and find One who is not only able to cleanse us but He is willing to do so, “I will, be thou cleansed”.

Do you think that man went back and practised wicked things after that? I am sure he did not. We often gravitate again to what is of the world because we have never really bottomed what we were as sinners in the presence of a holy Saviour. We have never drunk into the stream of the sorrows we caused the Saviour when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Shame on us, if after He sacrificed Himself in such sorrow and grief, that we should turn again to a path of our own will and ways. Shame on us!

Then, in Luke chapter 8 there is a woman who grasped the hem of the Saviour’s robe and she finds her relief in the only One that could give relief. She had spent everything on physicians but one touch of faith in relation to Jesus and she is healed. He says: “Who has touched me?” It is a beautiful thing that nobody can come to the Saviour without the Saviour knowing it. We read that she came trembling and fell down before Him (Luke 8:45-47). I should not be alarmed if a sinner fell down in his sinnership in the room. We do not look for outward demonstration because we are so very artificial. We are so prim and proper; we are afraid to show our feelings. If people would only cry out as they did in those days when Jesus

was here and when the gospel went out in its power! I believe a wealth of soul blessing would follow. The woman fell down before Him and told Him all the truth.

Then we read in Luke 17 of the leper, the one of ten who were cleansed, who when he found that he was healed turned back and fell upon his face before Jesus, glorifying God and giving thanks. Oh what persons we ought to be, emptied of self and filled with Christ. Have I said enough to show what I am after? Is this how we are? Would that we were more emptied of self!

*J O T Darton*

*Extract from an address at Leamington, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1966*

## **COSTLY GRACE**

Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our church. We are fighting today for costly grace. Cheap grace means grace sold on the market like a cheapjack's wares... the forgiveness of sins and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the church's inexhaustible treasury, from which she showers blessings with generous hands without asking questions or fixing limits... Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without a turning from sin... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is... the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Jesus.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all it is costly because it cost God the life of His Son: "ye are bought with a price" and what has cost God so much cannot be cheap for us.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)*

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