

No. 58

Living Water

'Living Water' is published by the Stone Publishing Trust
(Registered Charity 1034689)

'The Eagles', Headcorn Road, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BU

If you know of any one who might be interested in receiving this magazine, please pass their name and address to the Stone Publishing Trust. Copies of the next few issues will be sent to them free of charge.

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

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

The permission of the Editor should be obtained before reproducing material contained in this magazine. It is the policy of the Trustees to encourage the use of articles for the work of the Lord wherever this is possible so long as it does not infringe the rights of others.

Articles are sometimes shortened or otherwise amended and for this the Editor takes full responsibility.

Editor: Mark Lemon

Printed by Christian Design & Print, High Street, Bures, Essex. C08 5JG. UK

Living Water — Issue No. 58

Recent Ministry

Page

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS — CHAPTER 13

1

Continuing the series on Romans based
on Bible readings in Bromley

THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

Ken Hollands **4**

Poetry Selection

GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD

Freda Hanbury Allen **13**

PRISON WALL LINES

14

Written on the wall of a cell by an unknown Covenanter the night
before his execution

OUR TIMES ARE IN THY HAND

William Freeman Lloyd **15**

Testimony Section

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPENINGS MADE FOR THE GOSPEL
AS THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM BEGAN TO WEAKEN IN RUSSIA

Dr Lennox **16**

A Voice from the Past

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY — 1929

Robert Dunn **19**

Continuing the extracts from Robert Dunn's diary.

In this issue he shares his thoughts on the prophet Micah.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT — EXTRACTS
FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF FRANK PURDAY

19

A Word for Today

EXHORTATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Samuel Carter **20**

Reprint from "Living Water" No. 12

THE PROVING OF FAITH

24

(The forth in a series of extracts from the early issues of "Living
Water")

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS — CHAPTER 13

(Highlights of a Bible reading)

This chapter shows the right and proper way for a christian to walk in this world in relation to governments. The Roman christians to whom Paul was writing lived under a government that was pagan, and that had the practice of Emperor worship embedded in it. How were believers in the Lord Jesus to react to such an authority? Paul begins by saying: “Let every soul be subject to the authorities that are above him. For there is no authority except from God; and those that exist are set up by God” (vv. 1&2). In the secular realm this principle of rule and government has to be recognised.

It is not that issues of conscience will not arise, when in the words of Peter, “If it be righteous before God to listen to you rather than to God, judge ye” (Acts 4:19), but the principle that Paul establishes that in the ordinary matters of rule and government in the world, a christian is to be subject to the authorities. In verse 7 of the chapter Paul exhorts that where tax, revenues, honour or respect is due, it should be given.

The life of Daniel recorded in the Old Testament is a good example for us. Daniel was characteristically subject to Nebuchadnezzar and those that followed him, save in the matter of his relations with God. Though Daniel refused to accept the decree of Darius when it interfered with his praying to God, there was no spirit of rebellion with Daniel, he still served the king and in everything else was subject to him, recognising that the authority was given by God.

Those in authority may not see where their authority is derived from. The Lord Himself challenged Pilate about this, telling him that he had no authority except from God. The corollary of this, of course, was that such authority should be exercised in the way that God would have it. This Pilate singularly failed to do!

Right at the beginning of the Bible we see authority established by God in relation to this world. There was a great light to rule the day and a lesser light to rule the night. That establishes the principle of rule. When we come to trace the line of authority as committed to men through the scriptures we see how, although given of God, authority has always been spoilt by failure. We see it first in Adam who was given dominion over the animal creation. We can trace it coming through Noah, where again there was failure. Then we see God’s authority especially committed to Israel in the sense that God dwelt with His people and they were in relation to Him. That, too, ended in failure on Israel’s part and they went into captivity which brings us to the “times of the Gentiles” in which

we find ourselves. The Gentiles are no better and the abuse of God given authority has continued.

What Paul is saying in this chapter is that in principle, despite all the shortcomings, government is God's officer for a good work. It does not matter whether it was the pagan Roman power, or some of the Godless forms of government there are today: it is still God's officer and it "carries not the sword in vain". It has a responsibility for punishing evil doers, maintaining order and the like and the believer is to be in subjection to it.

It is striking to see that in the instances where God had to be obeyed rather than men, quoted in the book of Daniel, the result was glory to God. In the long history of persecution of the church, when believers have left it to God to deal with the problem, God has come in, in one way or another in His own time. When Christians have risen in rebellion, it has often led to disaster. It is very testing for us to have to wait for God's time, especially when God may not come in to a matter quickly, but may allow a time of suffering. Daniel's friends accepted that. They said, "Our God is able to deliver, but if not..." Even if God did not come in with deliverance, then they were still not prepared to bow down to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had made.

When we see that all authority is from God it helps us to answer the question as to how far the Christian is called to obey. The Lord, as ever is the pattern. He speaks of rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's and what is God's to God. In the Lord everything for God was perfectly maintained yet He was also subject to authorities in every way that was proper.

The allegiance of our hearts is to be to Christ alone. The Lord has shown us what His mind is; that we are to be obedient to authorities. That is His word and therefore we are to be obedient to Him. As believers, we have a responsibility to Christ and that is where our allegiance is to lie. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and we belong to Him: therefore we have to be loyal to Him.

It is vital for the Christian to understand clearly where we stand in relation to Christ and His Kingdom. The Lord testified to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants had fought" (John 18:36). Once we see that Christ's kingdom is not of this world it makes a total difference how we view the world and its system of government.

In writing to Titus, Paul says something very similar to what he wrote to the believers in Rome: "Put them in mind to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient to rule, to be ready to do every good work" (Titus 3:1). Our way is to be in dependence on God and to be subject to those who rule, not to be

insolent and demand rights, but to recognise that God is over all. This subjection is not an end in itself. It is to be a testimony to those around. It is one of the ways in which it becomes evident that believers have “put on the Lord Jesus Christ”.

While it is not mentioned here, this chapter would help us to see the importance of praying for the authorities. Daniel was a man of prayer and he would no doubt have prayed for the authorities a good deal. In the present day there is a great deal of pressure on governments, which may even claim to take christian ground, to do and allow things which are contrary to scripture. So there is a great need for believers to pray for governments and for all men. Christians need to be feeling in relation to the trials of humanity and pray accordingly.

Timothy was exhorted by Paul that, “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in authority” (1 Timothy 2:10). The reason is “that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life”. That is so God may have His portion from our hearts without hindrance. Satan wants to disrupt that tranquillity so that we might be filled with anxiety and the testimony be hindered. In a day when there is so much turmoil, a tranquil life is a wonderful testimony and the greater the darkness the more the glory of the light of God shines out.

There is a reference towards the end of the chapter to putting on “the armour of light”. A christian walking in this humble subject spirit would shine. We are each to put it on. That involves self judgment, because to put on the armour of light, we have to first cast away the works of darkness. We need to pray to the Holy Spirit to help us so that we might be able to do this.

Then the armour of light becomes a protection. If it shines out that a person is a follower of the Lord Jesus, that often acts as a practical protection in this world. People do not come such a one with certain suggestions or invitations because they know that as a believer in the Lord they will have no wish to participate in such things.

At the end of the chapter, Paul moves on to another reason for the believer to act rightly in relation to authorities: “This also, knowing the time...for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (v.11). This is not a reference to our first coming to Christ but to the coming of the Lord. To the time when He will come and call all His own out of this evil world for ever. Paul looks on it as “Salvation”. That event leads on to the establishment of the rule of Christ, when government will be perfectly administered.

In the light of that event we are to, “walk becomingly; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and lasciviousness, not in strife and emulation.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought to the flesh to fulfil its lusts.”

Based on a Bible reading in Bromley, Kent, April 2002.

THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

Isaiah 43:1-3

“I have called thee by they name”

2 Timothy 1:8-10

“God who...has called us with a holy calling”

Hebrews 3:1

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling”

Ephesians 4:1-4

“...walk worthy of the calling have been called”

wherewith ye

Introduction

I would like to speak about the christian calling. I must admit I do not feel equal to speaking about such a wonderful subject but I would like to refer to several scriptures hopefully to whet all our appetites to get to know more about the calling of God.

It is a wonderful thing to know that God has called us. If you are a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, you maybe think about the day when you came to know Jesus as your Saviour, but behind all that God called you. God calls people out of darkness into His marvellous light. God calls us away from something but calls us into something better.

I read in Isaiah first of all so that we might think of its benefit for us while we are actually here in this world. Then we might think about the holy calling, thirdly the heavenly calling and finally the hope of our calling.

God’s calling is well worth studying by all of us. If you are a believer in Jesus, God has called you. You are special. God has not called everyone. Believers on the Lord Jesus Christ washed from their sins by the blood of Jesus and indwelt by the Holy Spirit are the called ones of Jesus Christ.

From one viewpoint, the holy Scriptures show that God is interested in everyone in this world. “For God so loved the world” — loved everyone — “that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal”. (John 3:16). However there are people in this world who are the called ones of Jesus Christ. If you have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus God has specially called you and you belong to Christ for ever.

The irrevocable calling

Scripture says, “the gifts and the calling of God are not subject to repentance” (Romans 11:29). God never goes back on His word. Once you are a called one of Jesus Christ you are always a called one of Jesus Christ. Believers may backslide. Many of God’s people have turned away from Him and lost interest in His things but if God has called them they belong to Him for ever.

God says in Isaiah first of all, “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine”. It is a great thing to nestle in that statement of scripture as an individual believer. Jesus has died for you. He has redeemed you. He has shed His precious blood for you. He lives for you on high as the word says, “always living to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

We can rest our souls in that wonderful fact, “Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine”. It reminds me what Jesus said, when here, about the good shepherd, “he calls his own sheep by name” (John 10:3). Jesus knows my name, He knows your name, dear believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. You may be going through rough times, things might not be easy for you, there might be lots of pressures on you but I will tell you this, that you belong to Christ, He knows your name, you belong to Him, you are special.

Then He says, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee”. That is wonderful! I do not know whether Isaiah was thinking about the Red Sea or the Jordan. The children of Israel certainly passed through those waters. God saw every single one of His people safely through the Red Sea. And then when they crossed the River Jordan no one was left behind.

It is wonderful to know a God who looks after you, who has His eye upon you and to know that, whatever your circumstances, you are precious to Him.

Then there is a reference to the fire, “when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned”. Think of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, men who literally passed through the fire and they were not burnt. God helped them. God protected them. Even a heathen king could look in and see another One there, someone like the Son of God, he said (Daniel 3:25). He saw a fourth Person there who was with them in that fire. Wonderful to know a God who is so interested in you. He has called you from above and looks after you even now.

I think about these waters too in relation to circumstances that arise. Even in this country there have been incidents of flooding, of rivers rising and rising and people becoming frightened. Water can cause a lot of damage. But here it says that the rivers shall not overflow thee. Sometimes our circumstances can get on

top of us. It might be your home, your family, your business, or other things. Yet God would help us.

He says, "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine". Jesus said, "I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age" (Matthew 28:20). That is what He said to his disciples. And then He also says, "I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). One of the tremendous benefits of being called by God, of belonging to the household of faith, is you get special protection. God is the preserver of all men, especially those who believe (1 Timothy 4:10).

I think of the fire, too, in connection with the fire of persecutions mentioned in the Bible. Sometimes things can go against God's people. They can be persecuted, maligned, or scoffed at. It is not easy to be a christian in this world today. Secular forces, materialistic forces, evil forces, all around, are against God's people. In some parts of the world believers are actually being persecuted. Some are in prison for Jesus. But he says, "when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee".

It is wonderful the way that God, through Christ, mysteriously helps his people in all the problems and exigencies of life, whether they are in personal life or family life, among God's people or in relation to our fellow men. There are great benefits of being called from above.

The Holy calling

Our next scripture says that God has saved us and called us with a holy calling. "Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace". Behind the calling of God lies God's purpose and God's grace. According to God's purpose, we believers, are chosen in Christ before the world's foundation. But think too of the grace of God that has reached out to us, poor perishing sinners, and as a result of the wonderful work of Jesus it has brought us to know God. We have been brought to know His love and the love of the Lord Jesus. Think of what Jesus has done. He has annulled death, the king of terrors (Job 18:14).

I was speaking to two Muslims during the week. They were talking to me about the torment of the grave. I said there is no torment in the grave for me. They said, why not? I said because I have a trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, all my sins have been taken away by the completed work of Christ on the cross.

There is no torment of the grave for any believer. If a believer dies he or she goes to be with Christ in paradise because Jesus has annulled death. He has gone into death and rose again. He has overcome him who had the might of death. He

is now seated at the right hand of God and He has brought to light life and incorruptibility.

Notice that the christian calling is a holy calling. We live in an unholy world. If we measure things in this world by the ten commandments that were given to Moses, see how many of these commands are openly breached!

One commandment is to have no other gods but God. People do just the opposite. Many people leave God out of their reckoning as if God did not exist. Another is to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. People generally do not observe it as shown by the use now of the Lord's Day for major sports events and Sunday trading. There is now no regard publicly for God on one day of each week.

When we consider the command to honour father and mother, we view the terrible way in which family life has been degraded and that decline continues. People commit adultery with impunity. When we think of the command "do not kill", let us consider the number of abortions that take place.

I am not trying to go into detail about how unholy our society is but, as in the days of the apostle Paul, we live in a dreadful world, an unholy world. The gospel comes to people in the world to call us with a holy calling so that believers should live a holy life, a life that is pleasing to God. We all need God's power to do so.

I was talking recently to a young man who has made a profession of being a christian. He was castigating me for not going in for great demonstrations, faith healing and speaking in tongues. He said to me, All you are interested in is a holy life. But, you know, a holy life is a tremendous demonstration of the power of God. God can take a person who is a drunkard or a drug addict, or controlled by all kinds of sins - and miraculously change that person's life. That is the power of God.

That is what the gospel does. When a person becomes a real believer in the Lord Jesus, God seals His work in that person with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Note that it is the Holy Spirit and He gives us power to live a life that is different from the way of the life of the world. A way of life that is pleasing to God. The christian calling is a holy calling and would make people different from this world.

I do not mean different in the way of special kinds of garb worn and so on, but holy in the sense of doing what is pleasing to God. That involves living according to the standards set out by Jesus and by His apostles and taught in the holy scriptures. Let us not forget that the Christian calling is a holy calling. Christianity is not just a theory, it is not a set of ideas, it is not just a profession. It changes

human lives so that instead of being lawless and disobedient and violent people become subdued by the grace of God and live to honour God while still here in this very world.

The Old Testament emphasises holiness and warns of the danger of becoming unclean through defilement. We believers' in the Lord Jesus Christ have to remember that we live in a defiled world and we do need to keep ourselves. The scripture says: "keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 1:21) and again "keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). The best way to do that is through enjoying our link with the Lord Jesus Christ and having our eye upon Him, the one who is the Holy and the True. He would help us and give us grace to live a life pleasing to God while we are still here in this present evil world.

We should also remember the importance of holiness in relation to christian teaching. In this very epistle (the epistle to Timothy) Paul, who was nearing the end of his days, was very disturbed by bad teaching that was coming in and that was overthrowing the faith of some. As an antidote Paul emphasises the standard of the holy Scriptures. He tells Timothy to, "abide in those things which thou hast learned" (2 Timothy 3:14). Who did he learn them from? He learned them from Paul. And we now have Paul's teachings set out in our Holy Bible.

I would encourage everyone here to test everything you read and hear from the Bible. The standard for doctrine is in the Scriptures and God has seen to it that we have this means available. Part of our responsibility in relation to our holy calling is to stand against any wrong teaching that comes in.

Some of us know what it is to have absorbed wrong teaching in a subtle way. We should learn to separate the precious from the vile (Jeremiah 15:19) and we can do that with the help of the Holy Spirit of God, with the help of our Lord in heaven and using God's standard, the plumb line of the Scriptures of truth. May the Lord help us to understand the holy calling and may it be reflected in our practical lives as we are here on this earth in the absence of Christ.

The Heavenly calling

In Hebrews the writer refers to the heavenly calling. He says, "Wherefore, holy brethren" (note he uses the word "holy" again) "partakers of the heavenly calling". God's calling, our christian calling is a heavenly calling. The Old Testament believers did not have a heavenly calling. They had an earthly calling. They were called by God and their calling was a holy calling but they were called to enjoy an earthly inheritance. An evidence of the favour of God was that their land brought forth abundantly and they were blessed outwardly. They enjoyed material prosperity.

Christians are different, for we have been called with a heavenly calling. Outward prosperity is not a mark of God's favour. God may providentially allow some of His people to be outwardly prosperous. On the other hand, some of God's people have been anything but prosperous outwardly, but all are called with a heavenly calling.

Jesus came from heaven and made God known. Throughout John's gospel it speaks about "the Son of man who is in heaven" (John 3:13). He carried the atmosphere of heaven everywhere he went and He enjoyed his link with His Father in heaven.

Our heavenly calling should make a difference to us. It makes us, for example, pilgrims and strangers as in this world. If you are a christian you do not belong here. Jesus in His prayer (John 17) said "they are not of the world as I am not of the world". He also said "they are in the world", and as here we have to do what is right. Whatever setting we might be in we have to be righteous and, as far as depends on us, we should live in peace with all men (Romans 12:18). We have to obey the authorities (Romans 13:1-3, Titus 3:1).

We are to be here as strangers and pilgrims. I do not think that too many christians understand what that means. I think more christians understand the implications of the holy calling than of the heavenly calling of believers. I think it was J B Stoney who spoke of the believer as being like an exotic plant in a foreign land. The believer is in this world but belongs to another world. I think we need to understand what the heavenly calling means for it affects believers in many practical ways. I do not vote in elections. You say, why not? I am a stranger here, I am a pilgrim here, I do not belong here. I trust I seek to obey the authorities, I am obligated to do that, the Bible tells me to do it while here as a pilgrim and stranger. But I do not try to put governments into power. Why? Because I am a stranger here, a pilgrim. I do not belong here. I am a citizen of heaven. "Our commonwealth", Paul says, "has its existence in the heavens" (Philippians 3:20).

Believers belong to heaven and should bring a heavenly influence here as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5). There should be something attractive about believers. There should be something in our lives that conveys something of the grace of Christ, the outshining of Christ. But we do not belong here. We belong to another world. Jesus said to his disciples, "ye are not of the world as I am not of this world" (John 15:19). We belong to another world. We belong to heaven. We belong to Jesus who one day will come and take all who believe in Him out of the world literally to form His heavenly bride.

The Epistle to the Hebrews also contrasts Christian heavenly worship with what marked the Jewish order of things. Ceremonial washings and various rituals were connected with the Jewish order of things. They were not wrong. Indeed they were set up by God but earthly; we have a heavenly calling.

When Jesus spoke to the woman in John 4, she started asking questions about worship and she says, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain” - mount Gerizim. Then she said to Jesus, “ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship”. What did Jesus reply? “Ye shall neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father ... God is a spirit; and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth”. The Jews worshipped God in truth. They were given truth by Moses. But it was a material order of things. In Christianity we worship God in spirit as well as in truth.

Many of the so-called churches today have built up all kinds of material things that are stated to be for the glory of God. While I have no doubt about the sincerity of many in such settings, we should remember that the heavenly calling should affect the way we worship God.

Think about the implications of being, as the hymn puts it, ‘called from above to joys of matchless worth’. That should prevent us from seeking our happiness in things down here. I remember a believer speaking of his retirement home by the sea as like “the land that I had espied for them” (Exekiel 20:6). God may allow us material things providentially that benefit us, but our “land” is not our homes or families or circumstances. The christian’s life belongs to heaven and centres in Jesus.

We belong to a heavenly Church, a heavenly vessel. It is here for a little while and made up of all kinds of strange people like you and me and one day it is going to be taken to heaven. That is where it belongs. The Church has rightly been described as heavenly in origin and heavenly in destiny, but it is here at the present time in testimony. To be in God’s testimony rightly we need to understand the implications of the heavenly calling.

The hope of our calling

I now want to speak from Ephesians about the hope of our calling. Paul prayed that God might help those to whom he writes to know what is the hope of his calling (Ephesians 1:18) and again he states “one hope of your calling”. The christian hope does not lie in this world. Statesmen of the world try to solve issues, such as the terrorist problem. They try to solve the problems in the Middle East, in the land of Israel. What a job they are having! I heard somebody say the other day that things will never be solved in Israel. Neither they will in the hands of man. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes back, then they will be

solved. He will reign then as King of kings and Lord of lords. He is going to come back and stand on the Mount of Olives. That is going to be literal!

Our hope centres in Christ. It is a great thing to have a hope - a bright and blessed hope that centres in Jesus. We have a hope - our Christian calling does not end here. Paul says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). But Christ has been raised, believers who have died in Christ will be raised and all the saints will be caught up to be with Christ in the air. It is exhilarating to know what is the hope of our calling: to be with Christ in His very presence, to be like Him and to be with Him for ever.

We Christians have a hope that should lift us in our spirits out of this poor world with all its problems and difficulties and aspirations. It is a great thing to have that as bed-rock in our souls. "as ye have been also called in one hope of your calling".

So Christians have something to look forward to. Our best days lie ahead. Let us remember that, whether we be young or old. As we sometimes sing, when all the saints are 'without one shade of variation, all like thee, Lord, united by Thy side'.

Meantime, we should seek to walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called. To know more about that calling we should read some of the earlier chapters of the epistle to the Ephesians. They tell us wonderful things. For example how we are marked out for sonship, how we are redeemed to the praise of the glory of God's grace. The Epistle also tells us about the one new man, about being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. There are many other aspects that are connected with the calling of God.

And then Paul says, "I exhort you to walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called". That is an obligation on our side. We are to do it with all lowliness and meekness. God's marvellous calling is not to make us proud, it is not to make us think we are better than other people. We have been sovereignly called by God, not because of any good works that we have done but because of God's marvellous mercy. Remembering and enjoying God's mercy should help us to live in all lowliness and meekness. We all need help to do that, but these features mark the Christian walk as displayed in perfection in Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30). We should not be asserting ourselves, yet asserting God's rights and the rights of Christ.

Then it adds, "with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love". If I genuinely realise that another believer has been called by God just as I have, I would have tremendous respect for that brother or sister. Alas sometimes God's people do

not treat one another well. I know for myself that I have not always treated God's people the way I should have done.

I think if I recognise the dignity that God's calling places on every believer it will help me in the way I talk about them, the way I regard them and in my contacts with them. This does not involve surrendering any aspect of the truth of God's calling but rather I should seek to help my brothers and sisters in Christ as well as myself to rise to enjoy the height of God's calling.

So it says, "Bearing with one another in love". That is very practical because we are still here in mixed conditions. Although we have been called by such a wonderful calling, we are all here in mixed conditions. There are things in me that I am sure could irritate you: there are things in you that probably would irritate me. Therefore we have to learn to bear with one another in love. But let us avoid despising or speaking ill of any of God's people. It says: "Using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace". We do not make the unity of the Spirit. God made that unity (Ephesians 2:15,16). But we have a lot to learn in what is involved in keeping the unity of the Spirit.

God's calling is a very wonderful subject. May we all look into it and recognise what a great privilege it is to be called by God. May we realise too it is a holy calling and a heavenly calling. May we appreciate too the wonderful hope connected with the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus. May the Lord help us all to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called until we see the Lord face to face. May the Lord help us. Amen.

Ken Hollands

An address at Honiton, 23 March 2002

“GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD”

(Genesis 50:20)

“God meant it for good”, o blessed assurance
Falling like sunshine all across life’s way,
Touching with heaven’s gold, earth’s darkest shadows,
Bringing fresh peace and comfort day by day.

’Twas not by chance the hands of faithless brethren
Sold Joseph captive to a foreign land;
Nor was it chance that, after years of suffering,
Brought him before the monarch’s throne to stand.

One eye all-seeing, saw the need of thousands,
And planned to meet it through that one lone soul;
And through the weary days of prison bondage
Was working to that great and glorious goal!

And yet the end was hidden from the captive,
The iron entered even to his soul,
His eye could scan the present path of sorrow,
Not yet his gaze might rest upon the whole.

Faith failed not through those long, dark days of waiting,
His trust in God was recompensed at last,
The moment came when God led forth His servant
To succour many, all his sufferings past.

‘It was not you, but God who sent me hither’,
Witnessed triumphant faith in after days;
“God meant it for good”, no `second causes’
Mingled their discord, with his song of praise.

God means it for good, for you beloved,
The God of Joseph is the same today,
His love permits afflictions strange and bitter,
His hand is guiding through the unknown way.

The Lord, who sees the end from the beginning,
Has purposes for you of love untold,
Then place your hand in His, and follow fearless,
Till you the riches of His grace behold!

There when your standing in the home of glory,
And all life's path lies open to your gaze,
Your eyes shall see the hand in which your trust is,
And magnify His love through endless days.

Freda Hanbury Allen

PRISON WALL LINES

Lines written by a Covenanter on the wall of his cell,
the morning of his execution.

My last sun has risen,
It is far on its way;
My soul quits her prison
Ere the close of the day;
Farewell hours of sorrow,
I shall know you no more,
Ere day dawn tomorrow
Our union is o'er.

A bright ray is glowing
O'er the river of death;
I fear not its flowing,
With that light for my path;
Blest beam of His tracing,
O'er the gloom of that river,
Who its horrors embracing
Has calmed it for ever.

OUR TIMES ARE IN THY HAND

Our times are in Thy hand,
Father, we wish them there;
Our life, our souls, our all we leave
Entirely to Thy care.

Our times are in Thy hand,
Whatever they may be,
Pleasing, or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.

Our times are in Thy hand;
Why should we doubt or fear?
Our Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.

Our times are in Thy hand;
Jesus, once crucified,
Now leads His own with tender care,
Our Shepherd, Guard, and Guide.

Our times are in Thy hand;
Christ is our Advocate!
No creature power from love divine
Our souls can separate.

Our times are in Thy hand;
We'd always trust in Thee,
Till we have left this weary land,
And Christ in glory see.

William Freeman Lloyd (1791 -1853)

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPENINGS MADE FOR THE GOSPEL AS THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM BEGAN TO WEAKEN IN RUSSIA

Dr Lennox is a mathematician who visited Russia just about the time that the cold war was coming to an end. His account shows something of the remarkable ways in which a door was being re-opened in Russia at that time. There was a great deal of surprise that as a mathematician he believed in God but his academic standing gave him an opportunity to get into universities and similar institutions.

The beginning of the work

Dr Lennox had been at a conference of mathematicians and cryptographers in Belgium. Travelling on a train late at night he had the following experience.

‘I found myself in a train compartment with a Russian, amongst other people. The moment I spoke to him I felt I had to give him a Bible. But where do you get a Bible in a train going through Germany through the night? I discovered he was an ecologist from Siberia and it was his first time in the West. I felt that I must give this man a Bible. After chatting I suppose for 20 minutes I suddenly remembered I had a Russian Bible in my case. I got up and took it out and gave it to him saying, “This is for you”. He went as white as a sheet and then said, “How did you know that the only Bible we have ever had was stolen from us two months ago in Siberia? We suddenly got this opportunity to come to Europe. In a very short time we are going back to Siberia and you come and you give us a Bible!”

‘I said, “Actually, I did not know”. I asked him, “Do you believe this book?” He replied, “I am not sure. My wife is in the corner of the compartment; she believes it”. She took the Bible and said, “Is that really for me?” I said, “That is for you”. Then the train stopped; they got out and were gone into the night.

‘There was a German woman in the compartment. She said, “Does that often happen to you?” I said, “Not every Tuesday”. She thought it was incredible but I told her that it was not incredible at all. “If there is a God — as this book claims there is and I believe there is — and if His word is as important as I believe it is then He can use me as a postman or anybody else”. She was so impressed that she said she had better start reading the Bible, and she did. I know that because I corresponded with her for some time afterwards’.

The first christian he met in Siberia

As a result of the above experience Dr Lennox felt that he should go back to Russia for a month in 1990. Because of his mathematical background he met

with a number of prominent mathematicians. One day one of them invited him to meet his daughter and son-in-law who he said were christians. This seemed surprising since there had been no trace of christianity as far as he could see.

‘So I met this young woman and her husband. The young man told me his story; I really found it hard to believe and so I asked him to tell it to me again. As a teenager he had felt there must be something more to life than what he could see around him. In his school they were given an atheistic dictionary - that is, a dictionary that explained everything from an atheistic standpoint. In this dictionary there were verses from the Bible which were ridiculed and described as primitive ideas. He cut these little quotations out and pasted them into a book. Through that little book he became a believer in the Lord Jesus, without ever having met a christian, without ever having seen a full Bible!

‘He began to wonder if there were any other christians in the whole world apart from himself. He must have been 15 or 16 at the time and he decided to try to find another christian. He went to Leningrad, as St Petersburg was then known, some 2500 miles in a train and then slept rough for five nights in Leningrad Station . He tried to find another believer without success and went back to Siberia very disappointed.

‘He then read in an encyclopedia that there had been christians in Talin in Estonia. So he went there, some 3000 miles, and there he found a believer. That christian gave him a Bible and baptised him. He came back to Siberia absolutely rejoicing. He had found another believer and he had got a Bible!

‘One night he was at a party and noticed a young lady in the corner who looked as though she was asleep. He went and poked her and said, ” Are you praying?” Her reply was, “Yes I am. I am looking for God. Can you help me to find Him?” Under the hand of the Lord he led her to Christ and later she became his wife’.

A Lecture in a Siberian University

Dr Lennox was allowed to give a lecture in a Siberian university. It was the first time for seventy five years that such a thing had happened. They gave him a small room which held about twenty people. Dr Lennox records, ‘I shall never forget walking in and sitting down - you sit to lecture in Russia. All the seats were occupied. A small notice had been allowed which read, ‘A mathematician explains why he believes in the Creator’. When I was just about to start somebody pointed out that there were about five hundred people outside! In the end we had to take over the biggest auditorium in the University.

‘When you talk in Russia they have a great way of controlling the speakers. They write questions and they come up while you are speaking and they put them in a little pile in front of you. If you go on too long the pile gets very large. You have to answer all the questions else you lose face. I talked for an hour and then we had an hour and a half for the written questions.

‘A group of students came up afterwards and one said, “We invited the leading apologist for atheism in Siberia to tear you to pieces to night but he just left after your talk. If atheism cannot stop and listen to your answers to the questions then it is finished for me!” Then an older man, a professor of philology, came and put his arm round me and said, “I want to tell you that there is much more sympathy in this University for what you are trying to do than you might think.”

‘That was the start of it. I gave a lecture the next night to a packed house and other lectures followed.’

An article in the Journal of the Academy of Science

‘A reporter came to one of the meetings and as a result I met the editor of the Journal of the Academy of Science. I asked him if he would print a christian article in his Journal. At first he refused but eventually he did. None of us ever dreamed what would happen. It was only about 600 words but they were inundated by letters. They had never had so many before. Subsequently articles got into other papers. Some had massive circulations of over 30 million. Russians are great readers. One of the things I remember most is going into many humble homes where they would pull aside a curtain and show me their books and say, “These are my treasures!”.’

An experience on the Moscow underground

‘The Moscow Underground is very deep and the escalators accordingly very long. Four of us were going down an escalator and we noticed that most of the people coming up were reading the New Testament. It seemed very strange. When we got to the bottom we found the reason. There were two boys standing there, one about seven and the other about twelve. Their parents were both ill and they had come out to ‘do something for the Lord!’ There was a little paper package, almost empty now, of New Testaments. They had been giving them to anyone who would take them. Four grown men just stood there and wept. Here were two little fellows, just trying to do something for the Lord! Those are the sort of people that put courage into your heart and help you to keep at the work. ‘The eastern world has been brilliant at undermining the truth. The western world is becoming brilliant at it too, especially in our universities. So I would be

very grateful if you would pray for Russia, for believers there and for the work of the Lord.’

Based on an account given by Dr Lennox

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY — 1929

October 1st. Had a little time reading Micha the prophet, and find him a contrast to Jonah, read yesterday, and noted three or four points in Micah marking him as a prophet indeed. He felt the condition of the people, and was with God about it, and spoke to them faithfully and feelingly; but as one who was entirely given up to God he would feel the very strength and holiness of divinely-given power.

He suffered with the people in patience He interceded for them, sang songs of triumph in the night, and he worshipped. This prophet had very distinct vision of Christ. We were noticing how the unfolding of prophecy comes in from Adam downward, more detail given until we have Isaiah heralding the Saviour, a Child and Son, and His wonderful name. And now here in Micah the very city of His birth is named beforehand, as Daniel gives later the very date of His nativity to them who should seek.

Robert Dunn.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday)

It was wonderful that the Spirit should have come down upon Christ, that there might be set forth, in the power of the Spirit, all that was morally beautiful in a man, so that we might see it; we do not see it in ourselves, but in Him.

F. E. Raven

It is a great fact — the greatest fact next to the resurrection and ascension of Christ, that the Holy Spirit is down here, permanently in us.

James Taylor

Christianity began when the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead but was not established until the Holy Spirit came down from Him glorified at God's right hand.

J. B. Stoney

The Comforter — the Holy Spirit — was sent down from heaven for a twofold service. One, as we read in John 14:26, to be an abiding comfort and reminder of Christ to the believer, and the other, as we read in John 15:26, to testify of Christ during His absence. There is a different order in each of these as to His mission. In the one for the saint, He is sent by the Father. In the one for testimony, He is sent by Christ.

J. B. Stoney

“He will reprove the world of sin”; the world is exposed by Him. His incontrovertible testimony of the world is `sin'. Three letters, `Sin' are written on it, “because they believe not on me”. I do not want the statistics of crime to prove the world's guilt. The simple fact is that the Holy Spirit is here because the world would not believe in Christ; this is their sin. If you have the Holy Spirit, who is here for Christ, you cannot have the world who would not have Him. If you are in company with the Holy Spirit you must convict the world of sin.

J. B. Stoney

EXHORTATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Psalm 37

This psalm is full of exhortation and encouragement. It is unique among the psalms in that it has in it no prayer and no praise, though both doubtless flow from it. It is, of course, the language of the Jewish remnant in a day yet to come. But there is a moral identity in every age between those who would be loyal and true to God. Thus we get here three men spoken about:

the righteous man (verse 16),
the good, or gracious man (verse 23), and
the perfect man (verse 37).

Yet, viewing them representatively, they are all one and the same man who display these three distinct remnant features.

“A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked”. A righteous man who is only righteous does not appeal to us much. No fault can be found in his conduct, for he is the Pharisee all over. If he owes a hundred pounds and a farthing he will pay the farthing as well as the century. If he is owed it, he will exact the same. He is a man we may respect and fear, but we find him hard to love.

It is the good man — the man of grace — we love. “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die”, says Paul, “yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die”. The Lord has a special care over the good man, even as the good man cares for others. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way”. A good man dispenses to the poor, has a kind word to and for everybody, and is charitable and lenient in his judgment, even of his enemies. Yet his goodness must be combined with righteousness; otherwise his very affections, or emotions, may lead him off the path of uprightness.

When we get righteousness and grace (or goodness) together in a man, I think we get “the perfect man”. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace”. The perfect man is not perfect in himself, only one Man was that, but perfect in the object before his heart. He can say, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”. The apostle says: “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded” David is described by God as “a man after my own heart”, yet he sinned grievously but David never made an idol, God was always supreme in his affections. He could say, whatever his outward delinquencies, “I will walk within my house with a perfect heart”. God looks at our hearts and estimates what comes out by what He finds there. Spiritual perfection, or maturity, is not reached intellectually, but in the affections. The aim of all true ministry is that we should be “made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18). The perfect man is among John’s fathers in the family of God, his heart is full of Christ and he wants and lives nothing else besides Christ.

As I said, this psalm is full of exhortation and encouragement. The remnant speak often to one another in accents of counsel and comfort; and so can we! The first word of exhortation is a warning against fretting. It is thrice repeated, for we are very liable to fret. How prone we are to fret! How much there is to fret about! How foolish it is to fret! A fretful spirit is a fainting and faithless one. When we fret we writhe and wriggle under what we cannot alter. Instead of being subject we sometimes become savage!

We may fret because things in the world are so wrong. So the first exhortation is: “**Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity**”. How many of those who love the Lord are fretfully trying to better the world system which put Him to death, instead of recognising that by that very act it has proved itself to be incorrigible. The world is a crucified

system for faith and for God; it has been judged and ended in the death of Christ (See Galatians 6:14 & Hebrews 9:26).

The world kingdoms will yet be His, and the kingdom of heaven, though “in mystery”, is still here, and loyal subjects are still in it. It is a kingdom where the king has been cast out, but received up into heaven. Some one has said that the very preaching of the kingdom - the rights of Christ - is symptomatic of the rebellious state of the world. But the King is coming to set things right, and thus in patience and not in fretfulness we can possess our souls. (Psalm 2) When John entered heaven he beheld a throne, unmoved and unmovable, and that gave him rest, as it gives us rest (Revelation 4:1,2; Psalm 11:3,4).

The throne of God’s earthly government nothing can shake. Oh! ye who are fretting about the wars, turmoils and miseries abroad, reach up to that throne and rest in “him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Ephesians 1:7-12).

Yet, again, we may fret because things seem all wrong in the church. Hence the word: **“Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass”**. This man, the Antichrist, is in principle in evidence everywhere in that which now bears the name of Christ. The antichristian spirit is rampant and everything spells disruption and disorder. Well-meant endeavours are made, methods and means are employed by clerics and divines and sincere souls to bring chaos into order and unity! But the rightly-instructed believer knows that “evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse”. We cannot set things right in the “great house”, but we can set ourselves right by setting ourselves apart from its evils and pursuing “righteousness, faith, love, peace”. Fretfulness will not help, but faithfulness does!

Yet, again, the Spirit of Christ in the remnant warns against fretting ourselves about ourselves: **“Fret not thyself, it only tendeth to evil doing” (margin)**. We may fret ourselves because our local company is not getting on well, or because we see little or no results in gospel work, or because in our souls we are not prospering. Beloved, “it only tendeth to evil doing”. We feel we must do something to better matters, and what we do makes things worse because it is done in a wrong spirit. We fail to judge ourselves as utterly good for nothing, and thus we become more and more self-centred and unhappy.

Instead of fretting about ourselves, let us look to God to lift us above ourselves, that we may find in Him our rest, our resource and our reward.

Thus we see that in order to be perfectly happy we must be irretrievably disappointed three times:

with the world,
with the church, and most of all,
with ourselves.

Then we can look up to God and sing as we never sang before:

‘No good in creatures can be found,
All, all is found in Thee:
We must have all things and abound
Through Thy sufficiency.’

Now we come to what is positive. How simple, how needful, is this fourfold exhortation combined with encouragement to:

“Trust,”

“Delight,”

“Commit,”

“Rest.”

Why does it say, “**Trust in the Lord**”, and immediately add, “**and do good**”? Is it not because we sometimes hesitate to do good because we know that doing it entails suffering? Never mind the consequences! “Do good”, and leave results with God. The path of obedience is the path of blessing. The land of promise, the inheritance, is worth suffering for. “So shalt thou dwell in the land, and shalt feed on faithfulness” (Margin). Faithfulness ever provides abundant food and what it gives satisfies. Then we turn from what is given to the blessed Giver.

Next it is, “**Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart**”. The soul advances in acquaintance with the Lord, and finds its chief joy in Him. How comes it about that many of the desires of our heart are not satisfied? Depend upon it if we delight in Him, only His desires will be ours. Consequently we shall be delighted with all He does. There you have the clue. Whatever the Lord does to, for, with, by or in us pleases us. We feel He cannot act wrongly. We have not a desire apart, from His desire.

But what about the future consequences of faithfulness to Him? The answer is: “**Commit thy way unto the Lord**”. Count upon Him to smooth out every difficulty. “Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass”. “He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day”. Is any one suffering from being misunderstood and misrepresented? Do not fret because of obloquy; and above all things refrain from taking up the cudgels to vindicate your character. Care for the character of the Lord, and He will care for yours. He can manage matters for you better than you can. What good results from hunting down that which defames you? You will never catch it. Somebody has said, ‘A false report can run round the world before truth has time to put its boots on’. Yet truth will prevail at last.

“Cease from anger, and forsake wrath”. Why does that come in just here? Alas! we may nurse our grievances, and brood over our wrongs, supposed or real, and thus become vindictive! “**Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him**”. Whenever we have to wait thus it is because He waits. “Therefore shall he wait that he may be gracious”, says the prophet. We may not be in a fit state to receive what He has for us, which often is something much better than we ask or

expect. He has the blessing in hand, but we must wait for Him to bestow in His own time. A dear christian, greatly tried, once said to me, `I have just gone into my room, and knelt down, and looked up, and said nothing, and my soul has been filled with the rest of God'. Oh! this blessed stillness of spirit! `Be silent to the Lord and let him mould thee', that is how some have translated it. How sweet it is to be quiescent-to be moulded in the secrecy and silence of the sanctuary.

‘Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand:
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.’

Now we reach the climax of it all: “A little while” (Verse 10). The remnant will look for deliverance by the destruction of the wicked, but we look toward heaven, to the Lord Himself, to take us out of this ungodly world. “Yet, a very, very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not delay”. That is the promise! But says some weary one, `Why has He delayed two thousand years?’ “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” So according to the reckonings of God it is only like the day before yesterday that Jesus said, “Surely I come quickly”.

On the winding river of time we can only see a little bit ahead. But there is One on the mountain-top who sees where the river rises and where it empties itself into the ocean of eternity. Everything is as present under His eye. “A little while”! How brief it appears from the standpoint of eternity. Soon we shall view all in the never-ending bliss of His presence above. Then exhortation and encouragement will cease because they are no longer needed. We shall no longer need to `trust Him for all that’s to come’, as we often sing now; yet we shall never cease, singing: `We’ll praise Him for all that is past’.

Samuel Carter

THE PROVING OF FAITH

(A story from the days of the cold war)

An active christian worker in a communist land was arrested and taken to the Secret Police interrogation room. There he found a Secret Police Officer and a doctor sitting at a table. Lying open on the table was a Bible. The christian prisoner was told to sit down and the interrogation began. He was asked: ‘Do you believe that the Bible is God’s word?’

He answered, 'Yes'.

The Police Officer then asked him to read Mark 16:18 aloud. The christian read: "and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them". "Do you believe this part of the Bible?" the Officer demanded.

The christian answered, 'Yes'.

The Officer then placed a filled glass on the table, explaining, 'In this glass there is a strong poison; if the book is true as you insist, it will not harm you to drink it. To show that we are not bluffing, watch this'. The Officer then called for a large dog and made it drink the liquid. In a few minutes the dog collapsed on the floor and died. The Officer looked at the christian and said, 'Do you still claim that this book that you call God's word is true?'

The christian answered, 'It is God's word, it is true'.

'Then drink the entire glass!' shouted the officer.

The believer knew that this was his supreme test. He asked for permission to pray before drinking the poison. He knelt down at the table, took the glass in his hands and began to pray. He prayed for his family that they might remain steadfast in the faith. He prayed for the communist officer and the doctor sitting there that they might find God and become believers. Then closing his prayer he said, 'O Lord, Thou seest how they have challenged Thee. I am ready to die but I believe in Thy word that nothing shall happen to me. Should Thy plan be different I am ready to meet Thee. My life is in Thy hands, may Thy will be done'. With that he lifted up the glass and drank it down!

The officer and the doctor were surprised. They had expected him to crack first. They sat there waiting for him to collapse, just as the dog had done. Moments passed into minutes, minutes seemed to be like hours. Complete silence filled the room. The doctor made the first move, He took up the christian's arm and felt his pulse. it was normal. He looked for other symptoms. There were none!

Expressing astonishment, he continued his examination but could find no trace of the poison working. As the examination continued the doctor became more and more perplexed. Finally he slumped into a seat, paused for a moment, then reached out for the Bible. Holding on to it he said, 'From today I also will believe this book. It must be true. I too, am ready to believe in this Christ who has performed this miracle before my very eyes'.

*Extracted from "Missionary Gleanings" 1969, Edited by William Missen.
(Reprinted from "Living Water" No. 12)*