

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

Cover Picture — Snowdonia

Printed by Christian Design & Print, High Street, Bures, Essex. CO8 5JG. UK

Living Water — Issue No. 64

July — August 2004

Recent Ministry		Page
THE KINGDOM	David Bond	1
Based on a reading at Peterhead, 4 th October 2003		
THE LOVE OF JESUS	George Greeves	8
The first of a series of articles		

Poetry Selection

CAPTIVE YET FREE	Genie S. Pelling	10
A poem found in J.N.Darby's Bible		
WHAT WILL IT BE?	Miss A. Ross	10
“WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE”	Frances Ridley Havergal	11

Testimony Section

FINDING GOD IN THE WRECKAGE OF THE WORLD		
TRADE CENTRE	Robert Matthews	12
As we get nearer to September 11 many people will remember the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001. Robert Matthews shares his experience of the grace of God.		

A Voice from the Past

GOD'S MERCY AND GRACE		14
Extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday.		
THE BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE TESTIMONY		16
	Joseph B.Crosland	
SHEPHERD CARE	A. E. Myles	19

A Word for Today

THINGS ENTRUSTED TO US — OUR SERVICE	F. S. Marsh	23
Have we each found our work for the Lord?		
The second of a series of articles.		

THE KINGDOM

When the Lord Jesus came out of death “He presented himself living, ...being seen by them during forty days, and speaking of the things which concern the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Perhaps we might get some help together as to the kingdom and the various characteristics that mark it.

“...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in this serves the Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men”. Romans 14:17-18

In Romans 14 the moral features of the kingdom are emphasised in contrast to material order. Righteousness, peace and joy are maintained by the presence of a divine Person here, the Holy Spirit. They are features that God desires to see practically among His people, in a world that is marked by increasing unrighteousness, unrest and lack of joy.

At times, we seek after things that we think will give us pleasure and find they are disappointing. That marks the whole world system. These features of the kingdom lie in the Spirit and if we are to prosper in our souls we need to pursue them.

The foundations of all that is in the world are being overthrown and the social order is collapsing. However, there is an order of things that will not collapse because it is maintained in the power of the Spirit of God. He will ensure that everything that is according to God will go through. The need for us is to enter in and enjoy the things that He would provide for us.

In this kingdom there is consideration for the weakest. It is not so in man's world but it is in God's world. It is not intended, of course, that the weak should continue weak but that they should become strong.

The Lord had to tell the Pharisees that “The kingdom of God does not come with observation” (Luke 17:20) because it was there in their midst. The moral features of the kingdom were seen in the Lord Himself. He could say, “... behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:21) and again “But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then indeed the kingdom of God is come upon you” (Matthew 12:28). It was demonstrated in Him; now it lies in the Holy Spirit. Christ is on high and the Holy Spirit is here and

that means that the kingdom is invincible. Publicly there is much confusion and brokenness but the kingdom has not gone to pieces; it is maintained morally in believers. The kingdom largely relates to our individual pathway and the way in which these moral principles are worked out and maintained in our lives. The effects are seen in the way that the people of God here are subject to the authority of Christ. It underlies what is collective.

It is to be seen livingly in persons who are walking in love.

The epistle to the Colossians tells us that we have been translated from the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. The kingdom is really God acting in grace to secure us out of a world of disorder and ruin to bring us into an ordered system according to His own mind.

It is most important to keep this in view in our individual pathways. We are exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit; then, as christians gather together, they are to be under the direct control of the Holy Spirit. The presence of a divine Person shuts out anything that is carnal. It is a challenge to all of us as to whether righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit mark us. Christians, if they are acting according to the principles of the kingdom, would be a demonstration of it in their personal lives. Earlier in the epistle Paul speaks of “God’s power to salvation”. What we are speaking of is really part of that power. It is the transfer from flesh to the Spirit. The epistle to the Romans brings in present salvation. The eye of God is upon us, not just when we are together but in our individual lives. We are to maintain righteousness in our business dealings.

Peace and joy are consequent on righteousness. We read, “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever” (Isaiah 32:17). It is a basic principle with God. We are also to depart from iniquity to “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace” (2 Timothy 2:22). Those four things provide a habitation which is suitable for the Lord.

Righteousness, peace and joy will be established publicly in the world to come but the christian is to know them now. That means that I accept and submit to the rights of the Lord over me. Disorder comes among the people of God when everybody thinks they can do as they like. People take account

of christians and as they see them righteous in their dealings they would like them to join in to build up the world's system, but that is not the mind of God. This world is judged. That judgment has not yet been given effect to, but it is a judged system and therefore the christian has no part in it; he has to leave it morally. That, alas, is little understood by many believers. Trying to make this world better is a hopeless task because Christ is cast out.

We need to recognise the rights of the Lord. That should govern all that we do. If it were so, what an ordered system God would be able to look down on amongst His people. It is not the rule of law; it is the rule of love. Our affections are moved towards Christ and therefore we desire to be subject to Him.

There is a great scarcity of happiness in the world today, but persons who are in the gain of the kingdom know joy in the Holy Spirit. The Queen of Sheba gives an illustration of it. When she saw Solomon's kingdom she said, "Happy are thy men!" (1 Kings 10:8). Are we happy in our christianity, or are we seeking after the things of the world? We cannot have a foot in both camps. If we are committed to Christ we shall find our enjoyment there and things will not be a drag for us; we shall be living in the enjoyment of divine love.

“See that ye refuse not him that speaks. For if those did not escape who had refused him who uttered the oracles on earth, much more we who turn away from him who does so from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, saying, Yet once will I shake not only the earth, but also the heaven. But this Yet once, signifies the removing of what is shaken, as being made, that what is not shaken may remain. Wherefore let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, have grace, by which let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear.”
Hebrews 12:25-29

In Hebrews the kingdom is marked by stability; it cannot be shaken. What a word that is for us as living in a world where everything is being shaken. The writer is addressing discouraged christians who had suffered much and they are exhorted to lift up the hands that hang down and the failing knees

and make straight paths for the feet. He also says, “See that ye refuse not him that speaks”. What a comfort it is that the Spirit’s voice can still be heard. The Holy Spirit of God would speak to us of Christ and would attract our hearts away from this material world to the scene where Christ is. Then as the chapter continues, we are to receive a kingdom not to be shaken. How comforting that is. God is about to shake the heavens as well as the earth but there is that which will not be shaken.

The Hebrews were to “receive” this kingdom. It is the Spirit’s way of attracting them into it. They were beginning to wilt under the pressure of the way. They had suffered privation, their goods had been spoiled and they needed encouragement. It is a priestly approach. Earlier in the chapter it speaks of the great things we have come to, mount Zion and the other matters mentioned. We are to come into the good of them, and not be tossed about by the various influences that affect the people of God, but have our minds governed by the Spirit to discern what is of God and what is not.

At the beginning of the chapter it speaks of “a cloud of witnesses”. There was nothing outward in the circumstances of those people that was favourable. (That is often the position of the christian today.) It is recorded that some were even sawn asunder rather than surrender. Think of the martyrdom of Stephen; even as the stones smashed into his body the power of the kingdom was maintained: “...being full of the Holy Spirit, having fixed his eyes on heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55). Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi are other examples for us; they were praising God with singing. The kingdom was there in triumph.

As receiving this kingdom, we ought to be thankful because today men are in fear, doubt and anguish, but the believer has tasted by grace the stability and glory of what has been brought in by Christ and established by God.

If we are in the good of the kingdom we also have respect to God’s ordinances. The epistle speaks of marriage being held every way in honour and the bed being undefiled. The maintenance of moral standards is part of kingdom truth and they should be upheld by believers.

“At my first defence no man stood with me, but all deserted me. May it not be imputed to them. But the Lord stood with me, and gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made, and all those of the nations should hear; and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth. The Lord shall deliver me from every wicked work, and shall preserve me for his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory to the ages of ages. Amen.”
2 Timothy 4:16-18.

In 2 Timothy the heavenly character of the kingdom is emphasised. Paul says He will “preserve me for his heavenly kingdom”. It is a heavenly order of things as under the eye of God.

2 Timothy is a very solemn letter addressed to a young man who was concerned about the testimony. We may say, ‘Well, Paul, it has all gone to pieces’, but whatever the appearance outwardly that is not so at all. Earlier in the epistle Paul says, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to Him” (2 Timothy 1:12). Everything was to be held intact, whatever might outwardly overrun the testimony here. Paul could see things going through in triumph.

So here he is, a lonely pilgrim, about to stand again before the might of the Roman Empire, but he says, “the Lord stood with me”. What a wonderful triumph. Paul concluded the first epistle to Timothy by speaking of Jesus Christ who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate. Here he is in the same situation himself but the Lord stood with him whereas when the Lord stood before Pilate He was alone. Paul could not meet the challenge of this himself but “the Lord gave me power”.

The Lord promises this support to all His own when called upon to give testimony to Him. He says, ‘I will provide all that is needed for it’ and many have proved it to be so.

Paul had the assurance that he would be preserved from every wicked work. It must have been a great comfort to the apostle to know that He will “preserve me for his heavenly kingdom”. It is a heavenly order of things that the christian is to enter into and the more we enter into it the more we shall be detached from the things of this world.

“And the seventh angel sounded his trumpet: and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages. And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, He who is and who was, that thou hast taken thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations have been full of wrath, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the recompense to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth.”

Revelation 11:15-18

In Revelation 11 the power of the kingdom is manifested. It looks on to the world to come and the setting up of the reign of Christ. The judgments are seen as completed in chapter eleven and “the kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ has come”. It is a time that is very near to us. We need to be prepared and ready for it, being morally in keeping with the day of Christ’s appearing, the day when everything will be set right. All the sufferings of God’s people will be recompensed in the day when everything will be brought into subjection to Christ.

God will deal with every element of evil. When John the Baptist saw the Lord he said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world”. He was looking forward to the cleansing of the whole scene. We often refer to that in the gospel but it is a forward look to the world to come.

Believers are to share in the reign of Christ because the principles of the kingdom have been worked out down here in conditions of adversity. In that way they are morally qualified to take up that place. That is why Paul says to Timothy, “if we endure, we shall also reign together” (2 Timothy 2:12). Therefore, as Christians we do not want to be identified with the present world but to be morally in accord with the world to come. It is a challenge to us. Are we really waiting for the time when our Lord will be vindicated, when His shame, scorn and rejection will be reversed when He comes out in His public glory? That is what should be occupying our attention now. It would deliver us from the “present evil world” (Galatians 1:4).

Revelation 11 shows a celebration in heaven and John is let into the secret of it. He was in isolation but he heard a voice saying, “Come up here”. That invitation takes us out of a scene of disorder and confusion and introduces us to what is happening in heaven. What a wonderful view John had.

Whilst Paul speaks of all in Asia turning away from him, John sees recovery in Philadelphia. To Philadelphia the Lord says, “thou hast a little power, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name” (Revelation 3:8). To enter into the spirit of that is something to be treasured. Think of all that is promised in Philadelphia: “He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name”. Such persons are stable; they are not shaken. They know what it is to enjoy the Lord’s supper and the service of praise and they have entered into it in their hearts. They will not go away. These things are too precious to them.

Finally, the kingdom is given up “to him who is God and Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24). He gives it over to God “that God may be all in all”. He hands it over without any stain upon it. Everything has been maintained according to the rights of God. We can understand therefore what is presented here, that the elders fell on their faces and worshipped God. It is something we should seek to touch in the service of praise — that all is for God.

The last verses that we read show us that everything is completed according to God. The elders worship saying, “We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, He who is, and who was, that thou hast taken thy great power and has reigned. And the nations have been full of wrath, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give recompense to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear thy name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth” (vv. 17&18). All that is contrary is dealt with. Every feature of faithfulness is rewarded in the kingdom. God will show His approval of those who have been faithful in times of great difficulty and trial. All is to be for His glory.

David Bond

Based on a Bible reading in Peterhead, 4th October 2003

THE LOVE OF JESUS — PART 1

“The Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me”

(Galatians 2:20).

Paul tells us that he had been set apart by God, from his mother’s womb (see Galatians 1:15). He could take account of the fact that the Lord had loved him from the very start. We might wonder about that, when we think of his history as Saul of Tarsus. Nevertheless the love of Jesus had been towards him from the very beginning. The way that Saul of Tarsus went was under the Lord’s hand. He was allowed to go so far in a headlong course of opposing and persecuting christians to bring home to him the depths of the love of Jesus that could forgive such a sinner as he.

Paul must have got some impressions of the love Jesus had for His own even as he persecuted christians. He must have seen the way they reacted and how they were marked by the spirit of their Master. It was particularly evident in the case of Stephen. Paul would have heard that prayer that he made for those that were stoning him: “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge” (Acts 7:60). That was the spirit of the Master. Stephen was in the enjoyment of the love of Jesus, even when the stones were being cast at him. Paul says afterwards, “when they were put to death I gave my vote” (Acts 26:10). He was there when Stephen was stoned: “the witnesses laid aside their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul”. And Saul was “consenting to his being killed” (Acts 7:58, 8:1).

Then came that moment on the Damascus road when Saul was struck down. That great light that shone on him did not burn him up as it might have done. No, the Lord’s love reached Saul at that point. Saul did not deserve it and he knew he did not. The Lord knows how to deal with every one of us, as He knew how to deal with Saul. He changed him. He put into Saul a deep impression of His love and that characterised the whole of Paul’s service.

The first thing Saul did after those days of fasting and prayer was to preach Jesus. He preached the One whose love he had proved and whom he had come to know as his Saviour. The Lord could say, “I will shew to him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:16), but even so he was sustained by the love of Jesus — the One who never left him.

There are a number of examples given to us in the Acts of the Apostles. Consider Paul going to Philippi. He was divinely directed to go there but ended up in prison, even in the stocks, yet he was singing the Lord's praises (see Acts 16:25). The love of Jesus sustained him as no other power could. What results there were in Philippi! Then think of what happened to him in Jerusalem; he was seized and imprisoned, then sent on a voyage involving shipwreck. In all his experiences the Lord never failed him. When all hope had gone in the ship the Lord stood by Paul. "Fear not", He says, "God has granted to thee all those that sail with thee" (Acts 27:24). I am sure that Paul prayed for everyone on that ship and they all got safe to land. What an example they had of a man who was sustained outside the circumstances in which they were. He was able to exhort those who sailed with him to take food and to speak of the One who stood by him. Who knows the results of such a testimony.

Paul came to Rome and in due course stood before Caesar. He was one lone figure, because we are told that all left him. There was no one prepared stand with him because they were afraid. Paul writes, "But the Lord stood with me, and gave me power, that through me the proclamation might be fully made" (2 Timothy 4:17). How he proved the love of the One who never forsook him. Paul rejoiced in it and he was saved, he says, out of the lion's mouth.

In Rome Paul was restricted, "yet the word of God was not bound" (2 Timothy 2:9). What blessing flowed out from that hired house in which Paul was; what wonderful blessing comes to us in the epistles that he wrote when in Rome. God knew what He was doing. The love of Jesus fills every epistle.

Paul opened up the greatness of the rapture — the glorious hope of the Lord's coming which filled his heart. Paul says, "we, the living who remain" (1 Thessalonians 4:17): he was waiting to go to the One who loved him. Paul would quicken our affections towards the One who loves us, so that we, too, the living who remain, are ready for the Lord to come at any moment.

George Greeves

Extracted from an address at Chippenham, April 2002

CAPTIVE, YET FREE

Low at Thy feet, Lord Jesus,
This is the place for me:
Here I have learned deep lessons,
Truth that has set me free.

Free from myself, Lord Jesus:
Free from the ways of men;
Chains of thought that have bound me,
Never shall bind again.

None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,
Conquered this wayward will;
But for Thy love constraining,
I had been wayward still.

Genie S. Pelling (c.1880)

This poem was found in the Bible of J. N. Darby after he had been taken to be with the Lord.

WHAT WILL IT BE!

What will it be when all life's toil is finished,
And we have entered our eternal rest;
When past for ever is the night of weeping,
And with Thee, Lord, we are for ever blest!

What will it be when all the strife is over,
And all Thy saints, now scattered far and wide,
Shall be without one shade of variation,
All like Thee, Lord, united by Thy side!

What will it be when sorrow's day is ended,
And pain and grief for ever passed away;
When with Thee, Lord, we share the bright forever,
In perfect peace throughout the perfect day!

What will it be? — In blest anticipation
E'en now our hearts outpour in praise to Thee;
But when we see Thee face to face in glory,
Then purer, sweeter, shall our praises be.

Miss A. Ross

It is reported that, during the Vietnam war, a christian serving in the US forces was reading this poem over his radio to another believer who had not heard the poem before. When the reader got to the end of the third verse he heard a loud explosion and lost contact with his colleague. He had passed into that perfect peace of being with the Lord.

“WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE”

**“For an angel of the God, whose I am and whom I serve, stood by me
this night...”**

(Acts 27:23)

WHOSE I AM

Jesus, Master, whose I am,
Purchased, Thine alone to be,
By Thy blood, O spotless Lamb,
Shed so graciously for me;
Let my heart be all Thine own,
Let me live to Thee alone.

Other lords have long held sway;
Now, Thy Name alone to bear,
Thy dear voice alone obey,
Is my daily, hourly prayer.
Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
Nothing else my joy can be!

Jesus, Master! I am Thine;
Keep me faithful, keep me near;
Let Thy presence in me shine
All my homeward way to cheer.
Jesus! At Thy feet I fall,
Oh, be Thou my all-in-all.

WHOM I SERVE

Jesus, Master, whom I serve,
Though so feebly and ill,
Strengthen hand and heart and nerve
All Thy bidding to fulfil.
Open, Thou mine eyes to see
All the work Thou hast for me.

Lord, Thou needest not, I know,
Service such as I can bring;
Yet i long to prove and show,
Full allegiance to my King.
Thou art "Precious" unto me,
Let me be a praise to Thee!

Jesus, Master! wilt Thou use
One who owes Thee more than all?
As Thou wilt! I would not chose,
Only let me hear Thy call!
Jesus! Let me always be
In Thy service, glad and free!

Frances Ridley Havergal

FINDING GOD IN THE WRECKAGE OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTRE

A few weeks before September 11, 2001, my wife and I found out that we were going to have our first child. She planned a trip out to California to visit her sister. On our way to the airport we prayed that God would grant my wife a safe trip and be with her. Shortly after I said 'Amen' there was a loud bang and the car shook violently. I found that I had blown a tyre. I replaced the tyre as quickly as I could but we still missed her flight and we returned home very disappointed.

Once we were home I received a call from my father in New York. He was a retired fire fighter. He asked what my wife's flight number was but I explained that we had missed it. He told me that her flight was the one that

had crashed into the southern tower of the World Trade Centre. I was too shocked to speak.

My father had more news for me; he was going to help. 'This is not something I can just sit by. I have to do something', he said. I was concerned for his safety, but more concerned because he had never given his life to Christ. After a brief debate, I knew his mind was made up. Before he got off the telephone he said, 'Take good care of my grandchild'. Those were the last words I ever heard him say. He died while helping in the rescue effort!

My joy that my prayer for the safety of my wife had been answered quickly became anger. Anger at God, at my father and at myself. I went on for nearly two years, blaming God for taking my father away. My son would never know his grandfather, my father had never accepted Christ and I never got to say 'Goodbye'.

Then one night there was a knock on the door. We were not expecting anyone and when I went to the door there was an unknown couple with a small child. The man asked if my father's name was Jake Matthews. I told him it was and he grabbed my hand and said, 'I never got the chance to meet your father, but it is an honour to meet his son!' He explained to me that his wife had worked in the World Trade Centre and had been caught inside after the attack. She was pregnant and had been caught under the debris. He then explained that my father had been the one who found her and freed her. My eyes filled with tears as I thought of my father giving his life for these people.

He then said, 'There is something else you need to know'. His wife then told me that as my father worked to free her, she spoke to him and was able to lead him to Christ. I began sobbing at the news. When their baby boy was born, they named him Jacob Matthew in honour of the man who gave his life so that mother and baby might live.

This story reminds us yet again that God is always in control. We may not see the reason behind things until we get to heaven, but God always knows. Please take time to share this story with others. You never know the impact it may have on someone.

Robert Matthews
Norfolk, Virginia, USA.

GOD'S MERCY & GRACE

(Extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday)

God's grace is adapted to man as God sees him; it really meets all that was raised in the question, "Where art thou?" Three great things come in to meet all this. God comes in, first, that man may be relieved of the fear of judgment, and secondly, that he may live, and then thirdly, that he may be delivered from the bondage in which he is held.

God delivers man first from the fear of judgment; he gets forgiveness so that he may never come into judgment; then secondly, God provides that he may live — he is under death here, but God provides that he may live; and thirdly, he gets salvation. Righteousness meets the question of judgment; life meets the question of death; and deliverance meets the question of bondage. These three things are good news. We cannot get salvation until we get life. It is first righteousness, then life, then salvation.

F. E. Raven

The tendency is generally to limit the grace of God to the need only. It is truly wondrous that the deep needs of the soul should be entirely and fully met; and as it requires the power of God to open the eye of the soul to see the first part which is so much required; so in like manner, His Spirit only can convince me, that He can place me in a condition free from need. How many delight in the first verse of Psalm 23 "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"; who never even contemplate or expect the second; where one is set in a place where only abundance meets the eye, and where want is unknown. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."

If one only had the first part, there would be a sense of an unspeakable relief, with the assurance that it was for ever; but there could be no present divine sense of its inexhaustible nature, or power, which is independent of all natural feelings, were not the Holy Spirit in us, a well of water springing up to everlasting life...

J. B. Stoney (10:168, 170)

God has taken pains to detail elaborately that wherein we may read ourselves as in a mirror, and see that we are shut up to grace; and having come to that,

nothing can separate us from the love of God. It depends on sovereign goodness; therefore I lean on what God is for me, and not on what I am for God. The moment our souls are brought to God, we find that Christ has more than overcome in love and put away all the evil we have learnt of ourselves, bringing His love into it. The ways, purposes, counsels, and power of God for man can never fail.

J. N. Darby ("Collected Writings" 33:403)

He acts in grace. It is the acceptable time — the day of salvation. He opens the door through the blood of Christ, and proclaims peace and a sure reception to all who come. The work is done; His character fully glorified with regard to sin.

J. N. Darby ("Synopsis of the Book of the Bible" 5:106)

Mercy is that everything is taken into consideration, circumstances and everything; and at the same time you get grace to support you. People make a mistake and think that if they supplicate God in a difficulty He will come in immediately. That may not be His way, but "the end of the Lord ...is very pitiful, and of tender mercy". We have to wait for the end, and meanwhile He will give grace.

F. E. Raven (19:556)

Paul did not lose the thorn, but got the grace... Mercy might have removed the thorn; but grace supported him with it.

James Taylor (19:66)

The "riches of his grace" reaches down to the need of the sinner; "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins". The "glory of his grace" is all that He can do for the forgiven one according to His good pleasure. The full purpose of grace is to bring man near to God. "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ".

J. B. Stoney (9:419)

God not only announces the way that He will effect salvation for man, but, as a significant expression of His heart, He clothes both of them with skins, necessarily procured by the death of the animals; that is, setting forth figuratively that God will recover man, through sacrifice, from the ruin of

judgment under which he is placed. His holiness is inexorable; they are driven out, but thus clothed, they wear the significant token of divine grace.
J. B. Stoney (11:308)

When Jehovah Elohim spoke to the serpent of the woman's seed, and said, "He shall crush thy head", what favour He was putting on the woman! It was as much as to say, 'You have corrupted and degraded her, but I will put honour upon her; I will give her a Seed who shall be capable of destroying your power altogether.' It conferred a distinction on the woman that was purely of divine mercy and grace.

Charles A. Coates ("Outline of Luke's Gospel" p.15)

God does not expect fruit from man, but His grace produces fruit. Man has no life from which God could expect anything, and so He gives a new nature in Christ, that He may produce it.

J. N. Darby ("Collected Writings" 17:289)

It is a world of misery, and sorrow, and oppression. If God interfered to change it, He must come in judgment and close the time of mercy; And that He does not do, while yet any have ears to hear. He allows, therefore, the evil which He will judge to go on meanwhile. And we, though we may thus have to suffer awhile in the world, ought in this sense to rejoice that it is yet allowed, because it is still a time of mercy extended to others. The end will be everlasting joy in a much better world.

J. N. Darby ("Collected Writings 7:85)

References (given only so that any extract may be considered in its context, if desired) relate, unless otherwise stated, to the "New Series" editions of the ministry of the individuals named. The reference for the first extract in this article is expressed as 14:149, i.e the extract is taken from the "Ministry of F. E. Raven" (New Series) Volume 14 page 149. All the books from which the extracts are taken are published by the Kingston Bible Trust, Wembley Gardens, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 9LX, UK

THE BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE TESTIMONY

It is often said that we live in a day of small things. We may well admit it and yet, whether we look at the history of Israel or of the church, at the people of God under the old covenant or the new, there have perhaps been few periods when the same could not have been said.

Yet, if in our day we have to confess our smallness in spiritual power, and if we also feel the necessity of separating from much that bears the Lord's name but is mixed up with the world, it is all the more necessary that we should preserve in our souls a strong sense of the large and central character of the testimony of God. In other words, we must maintain the truth that, whether the things of God look big or little in the eyes of men, they belong to the God who made all things and for whom are all things.

The Scriptures link up the gospel and the church with God the Creator of all things in a way which is very remarkable, though not always very much noticed. In the Old Testament perhaps we naturally expect to find the word of God linked with His creatorial power. The truth that He created all things, and that all things are His, is brought in as the starting-point, the foundation, the background of His testimony to, and through, His people. To Abraham He says, "Walk before me and be thou perfect", but He prefixes this word with the simple but resounding assertion, "I am the Almighty God".

Isaiah in particular is full of this truth as he announces God's promises of deliverance to the captive Israel. It will suffice to quote only one passage, that which is referred to several times in the New Testament in connection with the going forth of the glad tidings to the Gentiles: "Thus saith God, Jehovah, he that created the heavens and stretched them out, he that spread forth the earth and its productions, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will take hold of thy hand; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring forth the prisoner from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the house of restraint" (Isaiah 42:6-7; and see Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47 and 26:17, 18).

The gift of Christ as a covenant to Israel and as a light to lighten the Gentiles is here presented against the background of the creation of the heavens and the preservation of all men in life. Our view of the testimony of Christ, and of the deliverance of man that is associated with it, is enlarged by such a setting.

In the New Testament the glad tidings and the church are presented in the same setting, as if we were otherwise in danger of being cramped in our minds. Material things are small compared with spiritual, but the truth that the God,

“whose I am, and whom I serve” (Acts 27:23), is the One who made all things, covers not only material but also immaterial things, “the visible and the invisible”. We are not to think that spiritual things are, so to speak, uncoordinated with the whole creation of God.

Observe how our Lord, in giving thanks in the face of His rejection by “the cities where most of his mighty works were done”, rests in the thought that all things belong to God. “I praise thee, Father, Lord of the heaven and of the earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes” (Matthew 11:25).

The church at Jerusalem, similarly in the presence of surrounding hostility, found rest in the same basic truth in the beautiful prayer in Acts 4:24-30: “Lord, thou art the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them”. It is from this starting-point that the prayer proceeds to refer to the testimony of God and “thy holy servant Jesus”. If our thoughts and our prayers were shaped so comprehensively and so centrally, we should be helped to get all else into right proportion.

We may perhaps think it natural that Paul should preach to the simple and ignorant Lycaonians that they should turn from the vanities of idols to “the living God, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things in them” (Acts 14:15). But this primary truth is still emphasised when we come to the church and the gospel in their highest relations in the Epistle to the Ephesians: “To announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ ... the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things” (Ephesians 3:8, 9). If we had been writing that, should we not have missed out those last five words?

God is one, and He has created all things. “God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own times” (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). The Scriptures will not tolerate the idea of anything in God’s world being left outside of, uncoordinated with, the testimony of God in Christ. “To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him”. “All things are yours ... and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 8:6; 3:21, 22.).

Joseph B Crosland (1923)

SHEPHERD CARE

I read John 21 in order that we might take account of the spiritual concerns of one to whom the Lord committed the feeding of His lambs, and the shepherding of His sheep. It is very remarkable (I have often pondered it) that they should be committed to the hand of Peter, since he had a very heavy hand. There was no diplomacy about Peter; he was impulsive, a man who was marked by speaking first, and thinking afterwards. But there was nothing concealed; all that was in came out. It is to this man that the Lord commits His sheep.

I would not suggest for a moment that these natural traits that marked Peter gave him any qualification to shepherd the sheep, for there is nothing in nature that qualifies for that service. Great wealth, mental power, business ability to conduct and organise affairs will not give you the slightest qualification to shepherd the sheep. All that one would rely on after the flesh must be broken and natural ability as a qualification set aside, before the Lord can commit the least of His flock to us. He makes no mistake in His selection; He does not commit the most precious thing He has on earth, to those who are half-hearted, but to those who are characterized by deep affection. Such was Simon Peter, he was outstanding among the disciples in his love for Christ.

See what the Lord does as His activities here are about to close. He tests Peter, He tests him publicly. Peter has failed, and the Lord probes him that the root may be reached. The Lord never tests any one to find out what is there, for He knows what is there, but He tested Peter here (as He tests us), that Peter might learn what was there. We are tested in public by what we say, and the supreme test here was when the Lord questioned Peter the third time.

Almost any one could pass his first examination, so to speak, especially those of us who are versed in a phraseology that enables us to avoid mistakes. Then the Lord touched Peter a second and a third time, till it says, Peter was grieved. Now, the point is, what are you to say when you are grieved? When you are cool and collected and have time to think, when there are no emotions surging up in your heart, tending to take possession of your tongue, it is comparatively easy to answer; but when you are grieved what are you to say then? That is the test, the test of a shepherd. And why? Because every shepherd is going to be

grieved — grieved to his very soul, grieved to find, as every true man of God has found, that the more he serves, the more grief he must carry.

How graciously the Lord tested Peter! He is a formed vessel now, the product of divine teaching, and he will not trust himself to say anything at all about himself without adding that word, Thou knowest that I am attached to Thee. It is well to be careful when we speak about our love for Christ, not that we would deny that affection is there, but when we speak of the measure we have to be careful.

So Peter, with all his blunders, with all his impetuosity, has the sheep entrusted to him. It is interesting to take account of the movements of divine sovereignty, but you will observe they do not travel ahead of the work of the Spirit. There was a time in Peter's history, when he placed himself in the very centre of the picture, so to speak, and said to the Lord, "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death" (Luke 22: 33). The Lord did not say anything then to him about feeding His sheep, not a word, yet as acting in sovereignty He knew all about what He would do with Peter. But the manifestation of the movement of sovereignty awaits the formation of the vessel, and when Peter is prepared to serve the sheep, the Lord commits them to him.

Are you seeking some area or sphere of service? Be assured, when your affections are formed for it, the Lord will give it you. For all His movements in sovereignty have perfect relation to the measure in which the vessel is formed, the measure in which the flesh and will are broken down, and subdued by the power of God.

When the time comes for Peter's departure from this scene, he writes two letters. In the second you get a word which connects the two together, he says: "This, a second letter, beloved, I already write to you, in both which I stir up, in the way of putting you in remembrance..." Peter is thinking of his departure to be with the Lord, and he has the greatest concern about what is to happen to the saints after he is gone. One loves to see an aged brother, who has borne the burden and heat of the day, manifesting the deepest solicitude as to who is to take up the service of caring for the saints in his stead. What a comely sight to see such an one not grasping for office and distinction but thinking of the prosperity of the Lord's interests here when he is gone!

You may say, 'The Lord will prepare some one'. He will; but what He does is one thing, and what I have a concern about is another. The Lord can do His

work without any of us, if necessary, but the way He loves to do it is by using His people, and I am sure the Spirit of God would search out hearts who have a desire to serve Him.

This is what He looks for — hearts. When He gets one heart, He can build everything on that. He can build intelligence, for a workman must have intelligence as to the whole divine plan. The Lord can give you skill, for every workman should be marked by skill. The Lord can build all that is needed when He gets a heart. Such a movement of surrender that has this end in view — to lay down one's life for the brethren, must come from the heart. Mentality and knowledge of doctrine never produce that. They may lead one to seek a place among believers but that is not laying down one's life. So the basis of all shepherd care must be our measure of love for Christ. Do not talk of loving Him, if you do not love the sheep; the two go together. And do not talk of loving the sheep, if you are not prepared to take up the daily toil connected with their welfare. "Not by necessity", the apostle says "but willingly" (1 Peter 5: 2). If you say, 'I suppose I ought to go and visit a certain brother tonight, but I do not want to,' that is "necessity". What should mark service among us is willingness.

Then Peter continues, "not for base gain". The Lord will have a word to say to any one who makes a gain of the sheep. He will not have things on that ground; willingness and love for the sheep should be seen in all our service. I would plead for more shepherd care for one another. If I were a true shepherd, I should know how every sheep brought by the Lord within my sphere of activity was getting on. Sometimes we hear it said, 'There is so and so, who was breaking bread for twenty years, and suddenly went into the world and threw everything up.' I express surprise, but had I been a shepherd, I should have seen the way they were going.

The shepherd resists the wolf. A shepherd is not a military term. It is a title that speaks of love that will guard the flock. Oh, how much damage the wolves have done to the flock! If we look abroad among the Lord's people, we cannot but take account of the sorrowful position they are in. How has it come to pass? Through the failure of the shepherds. Every door unguarded by shepherd care, becomes a means of access for the wolf, and the wolf does not spare the flock, and so the sheep have been scattered.

Then there are the false teachers who have turned many aside — teachers who speak every evil in the name of Christ, so that the sheep are not fed, but distracted by men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them.

No company of the Lord's people can walk together, and be sustained and added to, apart from shepherd care. You go home perhaps many a night tired and weary, and you would fain sit with comfort in your own home but you think of the sheep and you rise up and go forth, not of necessity, but willingly, to care for them. All is done on the basis of sacrifice. If the care you expend on the sheep does not cost you anything, it is not true shepherd care. All is rightly appraised by the Lord, and in the day to come, in the day when He is manifested as chief Shepherd, He is going to single out all those who have cared for His sheep, and give to them an unfading crown of glory. They are going to have in that day a peculiar distinction.

We speak of glory, but it is not, as some suppose, a great blaze of light in which you can distinguish nothing. In the future day when the glory of God is manifested, one of the beauties of it will be the distinctions of glory. It will not be something confused and run together, but the features of it will be distinguished by those who look on. Amongst these distinctions will be the shepherds who cared for the sheep.

Paul could speak of his labour for the saints “for three years, night and day, I ceased not admonishing each one of you with tears” (Acts 20: 31). That is the kind of labour that is acceptable; you can quite understand an unfading crown of glory given to such an one. What marked his service was that it continued, whether he were loved or not, he went on; whether it was appreciated or not, he went on. He said to the Corinthians “Now I shall most gladly spend and be utterly spent for your souls, if even in abundantly loving you I should be less loved” (2 Corinthians 12:15). That is the character of service connected with shepherding, and there is great lack of it.

There is not lack of ministry, there is much light, but there is lack among the Lord's people of godly care for one another's spiritual welfare; and I am sure we can all say, ‘May the Lord promote it among us’, for His name's sake.

A. E. Myles

THINGS ENTRUSTED TO US — 2

Our Service

Mark 13:33-37

In the last issue consideration was given to our natural life as a trust from God; the next matter to think of is our service: “To every man his work”. In the first instance the Lord would have us hold Him in our affections as the object of our hearts. Is Christ your object? You may answer, ‘I am a believer in Jesus’. Thank God! ‘I know He is coming for me one day’. Thank God again! It is a wonderful thing to look forward to, but is Christ your object? When we get up in the morning, what is the great objective before us? When we have leisure, how do we use it? What is really commanding us? The Lord knows! Possibly no one else knows, for our most secret movements are known only to the Lord. He sees whether He is the object of our life. We may well pray “that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

It is well to value the sacred trust of service. The Lord says that the householder taking a far journey “left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work” (Mark 13:34). Have you been just going quietly on and saying, ‘It is very nice for those who are gifted to serve the Lord, but I suppose there is nothing I can do for Him?’ The Master Himself says that He went away and gave to every man his work — to everyone who belongs to that household where the Lord is recognised — to everyone that has come under the Lordship of Christ. Have you sought the Lord and asked Him what particular work He has entrusted to you? Have you ever inquired of the Lord what He would have you to do? These are matters to be weighed over in the presence of the Lord. We have but a short time to spend here and the Lord has directly linked us with His service.

There is the great question of the gospel, How do people hear the glad tidings? You may answer, ‘Preachers preach the glad tidings’. Yes, but how do they become preachers? Having heard the glad tidings themselves, their hearts have been touched by the love of God, and they are bubbling over to tell others of the God they have found, and of His wonderful grace. It is not

merely because they can speak publicly but because they are the subjects of divine mercy; their hearts are on fire to tell others of the wonderful story of the Saviour-God whom they once feared and doubted. He redeemed them and they now know Him as Father, so that they long for others to know Him also. It is not necessary to stand on a public platform to be a preacher.

Some believers, alas, say by their lives, 'It is not enough to have Christ', for when believers go to the world for pleasure they are telling others that Christ is not enough for their hearts. Every wrong step we take, every false impression of God we give, is in fact 'preaching' against Christ but, thank God, there are many who are preaching in their lives that His love is enough to fill the heart, that the company of the people of God is well worth having, and that the saints of God are the "excellent of the earth". Do you know what it is to let the influence of your love tell on those around you, so that those who know you say, 'There must be something in it or he or she would not be so happy!' A happy life before the eyes of men, when one has not to resort to the pleasures of this world, is a preaching for Christ — a living witness to what Christ can do.

Service is open to the youngest and feeblest believer. It is committed to our trust by the blessed Lord Himself. Are we going to be faithful or unprofitable servants? That day will declare how true we have been to our trust in the recognition of the greatness of the privilege that it is to serve the Lord. We recognise that only by His grace, support and power can we be true to our trust. I would encourage the youngest, for the Lord's service is a wonderful interest; there is exceeding joy in it. He puts the desire there; He grants you all the power and the grace to carry that desire out, and then He is gracious enough to reward you for all that you have done.

A short time ago, I was standing by the bedside of a christian who had been bedridden for several years. He was exceedingly bright. I went there to cheer him and I came away cheered myself. Just as I was leaving he said to me, 'I wonder whether you realise that at the judgment-seat of Christ this little interview is coming up and that there will be three hearts delighted through it'. I said, 'No, I have never thought of it; it was a joy to come. I did not attach any thought of reward to it'. 'That may be,' he said, 'but it will be

exceeding joy to the Lord's heart to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant". The Lord has approved of the fact that you have been to see me. It will be a joy to His heart, and I am sure it will be a joy to your heart to hear Him say it, and I know it will be a joy to my heart'. He had a sense of how pleasing it is to the Lord that one of His brethren should be visited. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Let us encourage the young believer to wait upon the Lord as to visiting the sick. There are many people within our reach who would love to be visited. There are many thus waiting for you to speak to them of the Lord. You do not have to be a preacher to do this. You must have your heart full of the love of Christ to do it, and you will be able to tell them something to fill their hearts. You do not need to be an experienced visitor. If you think that, you may wait until your opportunities are over for ever! May the Lord set our hearts on fire to be available to Him for His service. Remember that "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much". Many a young man may be waiting until he is able to speak to a large number of people. The Lord is waiting for him to have the heart to speak to one individual. It is possible to have right desires but to fail to carry out that which is entrusted to us.

It was put thus in that well-known Old Testament story: "A man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it" (1 Kings 20:39-40). He failed to keep his one trust, and lost his life through his failure.

That was in the day when judgment was ordered; this is a day when grace reigns, and it may be the Lord has entrusted to you one precious soul, to tell them the wonderful story and testify to them of your precious Saviour. Are you too busy here and there to keep the one trust the Lord has entrusted to you? It may be only one little service in this day of rush and bustle. The Lord give us grace to be true to the trust that He has committed to us, that we may carry it out simply and faithfully, that He may be glorified.

F. S. Marsh

In the next issue DV: "Our trust in relation to the House of God".