



# *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. C08 5JG. UK

# *Living Water* — Issue No. 66

November — December 2004

	<b>Recent Ministry</b>	<b>Page</b>
THE LOVE OF JESUS — PART 3 Continuing this series	George Greeves	<b>1</b>
THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB A preaching of the gospel	Brian Parr	<b>3</b>

## **Poetry Selection**

REDEEMED Samuel Wesley was father of the better known Charles and John Wesley	Samuel Wesley	<b>8</b>
A PRAYER	Gwyneth Bloomfield	<b>8</b>
THE VOYAGE OF LIFE	J. G. Deck	<b>9</b>

## **Testimony Section**

THE YOUNG GUARDSMAN OF THE ALMA The battle of the Alma was 150 years ago this year.	Emily Gosse	<b>10</b>
--	-------------	-----------

## **A Voice from the Past**

FAITH A final selection of extracts from the notebook of Frank Purday		<b>13</b>
THE GATES OF THE HOLY CITY	H. D'Arcy Champney	<b>14</b>

## **A Word for Today**

THAT CHRIST MIGHT HAVE THE FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS	Donald Macphail	<b>16</b>
---	-----------------	-----------

## THE LOVE OF JESUS — PART 3

### **“Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus” (John 11:5).**

In chapter 11 of John we read of the household of Martha. It was a household that was precious to the Lord — a real oasis for Him. Out of an atmosphere of hatred and rejection that was present at Jerusalem, the Lord could go into this household and find affection and be at home. There were three persons there, Martha, Mary and Lazarus and the Lord loved each of them.

It is a wonderful privilege to have a household where the Lord loves each of its members. The Lord rejoices in households like that. We find some examples in the Acts of the Apostles. In Philippi the Lord secured the whole household of the jailor and of Lydia (see Acts, chapter 16).

This household in Bethany were persons that the Lord loved. They were not perfect (none of us is) but the Lord loved them and the Lord was prepared to work with them. Martha opened her house to the Lord and the Lord goes in (see Luke 10:38-42). She thinks, of course, that the Lord needs to be provided for and she is very busy doing that, very engaged in her service and quite distracted by it. The Lord in His love just gently puts her right. He says, ‘Martha, you have got the wrong thing before you just at the moment. You have your service before you; it is Me you need to have before you’. If the Lord is before me, my service will take its proper place.

Mary, sitting at the Lord’s feet and listening to His word, had chosen the good part, and it was not to be taken away from her. At that time the Lord was saying wonderful things. Martha was missing it, while Mary was drinking it in. The Lord’s word to Martha was in love and Martha got the point. The next time that they made Him a supper it says, “and Martha served” (John 12:2). This time the Lord was before her.

The Lord helped Martha, too, as to the great question of His resurrection power. Martha knew the terms but she had to learn what the Lord Jesus was personally. He opened up to her that He was the resurrection and the life. The Lord worked with Martha patiently and lovingly and made her the vessel that He had in mind she should be.

Lazarus had the experience of going through death. The Lord got the message that Lazarus was very ill but He “remained then two days in the place where he was” (John 11:6). One side of that would be that the Lord was under God’s ordering. He remained until He got the instruction to go. The other side was the Lord’s love for Lazarus and for the sisters. They were to learn that He was the One who not only had the power over the illness of Lazarus but the power over death itself! They were to get a greater impression of the Lord Jesus than they would have had if He had come earlier.

When the Lord came, Lazarus had been four days dead. That was no hindrance to the power of Jesus. At His call, “Lazarus, come forth”, he came forth! All evidences of death were to be removed. The next thing we hear of Lazarus is that he is sitting at table with Jesus, the One who had brought him out of death (see John 12:1).

There is something very special about Mary of Bethany. I believe Mary outshone the disciples in the intelligence that marked her. Jesus came to the house and Mary took the place of listening to Jesus. She sat at His feet listening to His word (see Luke 10:39). She grew in her knowledge and affection for Him. Later, she brought something special and poured it out on the Lord. Martha’s service was acceptable to the Lord and what Mary brought was precious to the heart of the Lord Jesus (See John 12:1-3). It was what she had acquired at cost to herself but it was all for Jesus. She poured it out upon Him. He could say, “She has beforehand anointed my body for the burial” (Mark 14:8).

Scripture seems to indicate that Mary was not at the tomb of Jesus. There were those that went to the tomb and they got the word, “Why seek ye the living one among the dead?” (Luke 24:5). I think Mary was in the light of the fact that Jesus would rise the third day. What experiences these persons went through. They were products of the love of Jesus.

I think that is what is going on with every one of us. The Lord takes us through various experiences to learn His love, to be more attached to Him, to be here for Him and waiting for Him. A sense of the Lord’s love would make us become followers of Him.

*George Greeves*

*Extracted from an address at Chippenham, April 2002*

## **THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB**

**John**                    **19: 17-18 & 33-35**  
**Revelation**           **1: 5-7**

I would like to draw your attention to the verse in Revelation: “To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom...” There will not be anyone in heaven who has not been washed from their sins. The word in Hebrews about the blood of Jesus is quite absolute, “without bloodshedding there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). Every person who will be in heaven will have been washed in the blood!

The passage we read starts, “To him who loves us”. It is great to know that there is somebody who loves us! There was a little tract written some years ago and on the front it said, ‘Somebody loved you’. It is wonderful that somebody loves us. We would like everyone to know that there is Somebody who has loved them, loved them enough to die for them!

Some time ago there was a computer virus that was called ‘the love bug’. When people opened their e-mail there was a message with the words, ‘I love you’. Millions of people all over the world opened up that e-mail and got the virus. Perhaps the fact that so many did open it suggests that almost everyone wants to feel loved. Now, in the gospel we are able to speak about a love that far exceeds every other: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him may not perish, but have life eternal” (John 3:16). Again, “God commends his love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us” (Romans 5:8). Every person in this world has been defiled by sin and needs cleansing; we all need forgiveness and all need cleansing and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from every sin.

We all need a deeper sense of the defilement of sin. It is a stain that we cannot remove. There is no ‘easy clean’ from sin. The wonder is that God cares about us at all. In the hymn we sang at the beginning of this meeting we sang:

‘O Lord, what love for sinners Thou hast shown,  
To give Thy life for those by sin undone!’

In Isaiah chapter 1, God describes His people and concludes, “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in him” (Isaiah 1:6). Yet God says, “Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (v.18). That is the marvellous grace of God, that despite His

people having turned away from Him, yet He could say to them, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”. Is that not wonderful?

David, following his sin with Bathsheba, cried to God in Psalm 51, “wash me”. He was convicted not only of his action which condemned him but of the uncleanness of sin in the sight of God. So he says to God, “wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (v.7). He was not only concerned about outward recovery, but truth in the inward parts. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”.

Later, in one of the prophets, the word says, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1). A fountain opened up where sinners can wash and be clean. It is only through the blood of Jesus that sinners can be washed and made fit for the presence of a Holy God!

The book of the Revelation speaks of the holy city. It is beautiful: the foundation, the walls, the gates, the golden street, all is attractive. There is no need of a lamp there, for the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And then at the end it says, “And nothing common, nor that maketh an abomination and a lie, shall at all enter into it; but those only who are written in the book of life of the Lamb”. No one can get into the heavenly city or into heaven itself apart from the blood of Jesus and its cleansing power.

I love that hymn: ‘Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?’ What a challenge! ‘Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?’ There is no other remedy. In the shops we see all kinds of stain removers, but for the stain of sin there is only one remedy and God has provided that remedy.

When God’s people were in Egypt and He was delivering His people, ‘it was the blood that did it!’ It was not the miracles that God did, displaying His mighty power to Pharaoh and the Egyptians; it was the blood of the lamb. In every house where the blood was put on the door posts and the lintel they were safe. ‘Safe through the redeeming blood’.

You may wonder, why blood? Well, blood speaks of the life, “the blood is the life”. Think of the life of Jesus, its holy sinless perfection. That is why the blood has power, because of the One whose blood it was. Some time ago we were singing a hymn about the blood of Jesus in the street (and I confess that I was wondering what people who passed by would be thinking about us standing

there in 2003 singing about blood). When we finished a man came over and he said, 'I am a christian, but I am given to deep depression, and it is only the precious blood of Jesus that keeps me sane'. Thank God for the blood of Jesus. What a comfort it is to know that we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

I read in John 19 because there we learn the love of Jesus, love that brought Him down and took Him all the way to the cross at Calvary. He went out of Jerusalem to the place called place of a skull. The place of a skull was where they crucified Jesus, and two others, "one on this side, and one on that, and Jesus in the middle". What a sight. Jesus spoke three times about being lifted up. The third time He said, "and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me".

We must realise that Jesus was lifted up on that cross, and was made sin for us, and He bore our sins. Think of the enormity of it! John the Baptist speaks about "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world". I think of my own sins but also of the sin of the whole world and the sacrifice of Jesus is the basis on which God has dealt with sin for ever and He will put your sins away if you will have Him!

Then, John tells us, "The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first and of the other that had been crucified with him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs". That is a most amazing statement! He was already dead! They did not expect Him to be dead. They had not taken His life, neither had crucifixion taken His life. He said, "I lay down my life that I may take it again". Earlier it says, "When therefore Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and having bowed his head, he delivered up his spirit". Jesus knew that the work was done. He had made atonement for sin and that was going to be sealed by the shedding of His precious blood.

They pierced His side with a spear and immediately there came out blood and water. This was no accident. Jesus had already spoken with His disciples, "this is my blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many for remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). How remarkable that Jesus should speak about His own blood before it was shed, and say, "my blood ... poured out for you".

John had been standing near the cross and he was near enough to see that precious blood flow forth. Oh, how thankful we are for a reliable witness. "He who saw it bears witness, and his witness is true, and he knows that he says true

that ye also may believe”. A witness who could tell us about the precious, redeeming, atoning blood that was shed at Calvary!

John says, “To him who loves us”. That is His present love. Is it not wonderful to know the love of Jesus? A love that will never end. God said long before, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). That is like the love of Jesus. It has been tried and tested at Calvary then displayed in His glorious resurrection, and is a love that is eternally the same.

“To him who ... has washed us from our sins in his blood”. How great it is, to be able to speak about that having been done. We are not waiting for it, for all who have come to Jesus can say that He has washed us in His precious blood. We are “justified ... through faith in His blood” (Romans 3:24, 25.).

So we can sing about it. We can celebrate the love of Jesus. He says, “I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages”. He has the keys of death and of Hades. Jesus is in control. God has raised Him from the dead and He has made Him both Lord and Christ. He is seated on the Father’s throne and we celebrate His worthiness.

Then the verse says that He has “made us a kingdom”. That is another step in faith. The One who loves us and has washed us from our sins would secure our hearts and rule over our lives. He would not only be our Saviour but also our Lord, if we will yield ourselves to Him and let Him have control.

Recently I was speaking to a canon from the local cathedral. I asked him how he came to know the Lord. He said, ‘I was at a gospel meeting when I was 14 years of age: I did not go forward, but on my seat I asked Jesus to be my Saviour’. He went on to say, ‘It was some years before I got real assurance. I realised that I had never told anybody that I had accepted Jesus as my Saviour and I went straight away and confessed the Lord to someone and told them how I came to know Him and I got real assurance and peace’. The scripture says, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10). He is Lord of all. He has claims over us and we are not our own any more. We read, “ye are not your own... for ye have been bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). So we are to glorify God in our bodies.

I read recently of someone who many years ago went into a church unsaved but he was affected by the word as it was preached. At the end of the service they were passing a collection plate around. He had not got any money, so he took the plate, put it on the floor and stood on it. The person taking the plate round

asked him what he was doing. He said, 'I have no money but I want to give myself, my all to Jesus'. The man who surrendered himself to Jesus that day became a preacher much used of God, and, surely, all who will make a full surrender to Jesus will become useful in His service. Let us heed the exhortation in Romans 12 to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (v. 1).

Jesus' blood has also made us "priests to his God and Father". We can freely enter God's presence by the blood of Jesus and serve Him in praise and worship even as He has desired, as sons to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

John, in his epistle tells us "that which we have seen and heard we report to you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is indeed with the Father, and with his Son" (1 John 1:3). What a fellowship we are brought into. John wanted us to enjoy the same happy relationship with God as Father and with His Son the Lord Jesus Christ as he had; and the only way we can enjoy that is through the blood of Jesus.

It is the blood that sets us right with God, and in the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. What a privilege!

Truly the hymn writer says:

'O what a debt we owe  
To Him who shed His blood,  
And cleansed our souls, and gave us power  
To stand before His God!'

The Psalmist says: "he brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock; he hath established my goings: And he hath put a new song in my mouth, praise unto our God" (Psalm 40:2-3). Revelation 5 gives us a new song, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, ... Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain" (v. 9, 12). What a wonderful Saviour! John ends these verses by saying, "to him be the glory". So, may God bless the word.

*Brian Parr,*

*A preaching of the gospel at St Annes, 16 November 2003*

## REDEEMED

To Thee, O Lord of Life, I prayed,  
And did for succour flee:  
'Oh save' (in my distress, I said)  
'The soul that trusts in Thee.'

How great Thou art! How large Thy grace!  
How ready to forgive!  
The helpless Thou delight'st to raise,  
And by Thy grace I live.

Then, O my soul, be never more  
With anxious thought distressed!  
God's bounteous love doth thee restore  
To ease, and joy, and rest.

My eyes no longer drowned in tears,  
My feet from falling, free,  
Redeemed from death and guilty fears,  
Oh Lord, I'll live to Thee.

*Samuel Wesley (1662-1735)*  
*(Father of John and Charles Wesley)*

## A PRAYER

Lord Jesus, keep me watching,  
That I may firmly stand  
To Thy commandments faithful,  
Kept by Thy loving hand;  
That, freed from all temptation,  
Preserved from every ill,  
I may be daily treading  
The pathway of Thy will!

Lord Jesus, keep me praying,  
And leaning hard on Thee,  
That in Thy loving bosom  
My resting place may be;  
That I may learn more fully  
The sweetness of Thy love,  
And know in deeper measure  
The things that are above!

Lord Jesus, keep me learning  
And sitting at Thy feet,  
That I may be more lowly  
And for Thy service meet;  
For then, in blest dependence  
On Thee, my Lord and Friend,  
I'll learn in Thee the pathway  
That will in glory end!

*Gwyneth Bloomfield*

### **THE VOYAGE OF LIFE**

Loud howls the gale, and the heavens are dark,  
But swift o'er the waves scuds our fast-sailing bark;  
Her path through the billows is circled with foam,  
But the harder it blows, she the fleeter flies home.

Tis thus with the christian; afflictions may cloud  
And darken life's sunshine with gloom like a shroud;  
The waves of temptation around us may rise,  
And storms of adversity blacken the skies;

But the gale drives us swifter o'er life's troubled sea,  
To the haven of rest, where our hearts long to be;  
And the waves that around us so fearfully swell,  
Bear us fast to the home, which our souls love so well.

Our compass is faith, and our chart is the Word,  
Our pole star the cross of our now risen Lord:  
Our anchor is hope, our affections the sail,  
That is spread up aloft in the favouring gale.

And soon shall life's perilous voyage be run,  
Its dangers be over, the harbour be won,  
Where tempests assail not, where conflicts all cease,  
And we'll anchor secure in the haven of peace.

*J. G. Deck*

## THE YOUNG GUARDSMAN OF THE ALMA

2004 is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of the Crimean war (1854-1856). The Alma, on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1854, was the first major battle of the war. Here Emily Gosse tells of her witness to two brothers one of whom died in the battle.

Later Mrs Gosse based a tract on her experience, aimed particularly at soldiers. It is understood that over 500,000 copies of this tract were distributed.

\*\*\*\*\*

‘Is that your son?’ I asked, looking at a fine young guardsman, whose bright new scarlet military uniform marked him out.

‘Yes’, replied his father, ‘he has been in the army these ten years. I have another son in the same regiment, and they are both to sail for the East next week, to fight the Russians’.

I asked the youth what his feelings were about going to war and what were his hopes of eternity, but found him apparently ignorant, but not indisposed to hear of Jesus and the way of salvation. I therefore said, ‘If I give you a little book, will you read it when on board ship?’

He readily promised.

‘He shall come up to your house and fetch it, if you please’, said the father, ‘and if his brother is out on leave tomorrow, he will come up too, and perhaps you will give them both a little advice’. I said, ‘I should be glad to see them’, and left.

The next afternoon the young man punctually made his appearance, excusing the absence of his brother, who was on duty. He was a fine young man who sat bolt upright, twirling his military cap with an embarrassed air. It was a solemn thought that I was speaking to one perhaps on the verge of eternity, one utterly obtuse to the thought of death, temporal or spiritual and my heart was lifted up for wisdom to speak with him.

Briefly, but very simply, I put before him his fallen state by nature, and sought to make him feel himself a sinner by practice, showing him the utter hopelessness of all attempts to save himself, and sought to lead him to Jesus, whose “blood cleanseth from all sin”.

He listened attentively, and promised to read his Bible and the little book given to him, and so he departed.

The following week we had a visit from the elder son, who very much resembled his brother, and to whom we spoke, much in the same way.

We shall probably never know the results of these conversation till we get to glory. One at least of them has long since passed into the unseen world. The voyage to the Crimea was almost the whole time allotted to him to seek that salvation of which we spoke to him. If he used that brief season aright, if he came by faith to God, through the precious blood of Jesus, all is now well with him; if not, he is now beyond the reach of hope or mercy.

Many a person who reads this tract may be nearer death than were those young men, when they sat a few months since in the room where these lines are written. Perhaps you may also be young and unconcerned, hopeful for the future and careless of eternity. If you are a soldier, your bright regimentals may blind your eyes to the darker side of a soldier's life; and the vanities of time may blind you to the awful realities of eternity.

But those brave young fellows were willing to listen to the words of salvation, and I trust you will be also. You will not be more likely to be killed in battle, but should you fall, as so many have fallen around you, you will, if you believe and act upon what you have heard, be ready to enter another world with joy.

The first thing is that you are a sinner, born in sin and subject to death: you have gone on sinning ever since you were born, and you can do nothing of yourself to redeem yourself from the consequences of this incessant transgression. You are also quite unfit for heaven, even if you could get admittance there: you are far more unfit for the presence of God than you would be to take a place in the House of Lords among the great and noble, or than you would be to sit down at the queen's table, and converse familiarly with her.

You therefore need two things to fit you for the presence of God. You need forgiveness of your sins and you need an inward change. Neither of these things can you do for yourself, but blessed be God, He has provided a way by which both may be brought about. God sent His own beloved Son into

this world to live here below in suffering and sorrow, and at last to die. Jesus Christ never sinned: He was not born in sin like us, and through His whole life He perfectly fulfilled His Father's will in every respect. Otherwise, if He had had any sin of His own, He would have been unfit to die for others. His obedience was perfect, so His sufferings have infinite value. He died for sinners, and we know that His death was accepted because He was raised from the dead. If you had committed some breach of discipline, and were put in confinement, you would not come out until your Commanding Officer considered you had suffered sufficiently to atone for the offence. So now, God says to the sinner, 'Jesus has borne the penalty of sin; if you come to Him, confessing your lost condition, and believing that His death was all the satisfaction that I require for sin, your sins and iniquities shall be put away.'

Therefore, the believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is all that is required of the sinner in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins. But you also require a new heart to enable you to obey God in future. This, too, is God's gift to all who believe on Jesus. When the Lord Jesus ascended up into heaven, He sent down His Holy Spirit, and that Holy Spirit is given to those who believe.

Therefore, only come to God confessing that you cannot save yourself, and believing in Him who can save you, and you shall be forgiven; a new heart shall be given to you, and the Holy Spirit shall come and dwell with you, and keep you through life and death, and guide you to a blessed eternity.

Of these young soldiers only one was at that time called to go to the Crimea. The next news we heard was a brief letter from their father to say that, 'He fell among the first in the battle of the Alma. In charging the enemy he was killed by a twenty-four pound shot, which forced his arm through his body. He was next to the colours, which were shot in twenty-four places, and the staff was shot in two in the Ensign's hands.'

Thus suddenly may it soon be the turn of the reader of this tract to enter the presence of his Maker. May you be prepared. May you receive the advice now given to you, and turn to God by faith in Jesus; and then the twenty-four pounder of the Russians, or death by any other means, shall be only as the angel sent to carry you into the presence of Jesus. God grant that the writer may meet poor John R.... there, and you also.

‘Our life is ever on the wing,  
And death is ever nigh;  
The moment when our lives begin  
We then begin to die.’

*Emily Gosse (1806-1857)*

*Reproduced by permission of the British Library.*

## FAITH

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

Faith is the acceptance of God’s mercy and grace in Christ Jesus. The grace of faith, or the power of believing, is the gift of God; the act of faith, or actual believing, is the exercise of that power. When God presents His truth to us... He holds us accountable for the exercise of the faith He has given us.

*J. N. Darby (“Collected Writings” 33:51)*

Faith has always been the principle animating the people of God. Faith has always lived in view of the world to come — of the invisible. It apprehended that God would have a world, and therefore it refused the present world.

*J. B. Stoney (5:117)*

There is a difference between Abraham’s faith and ours. He believed, and rightly so, that God could raise the dead. We believe that God has done it. And this is a very important difference. Abraham was right in believing God’s own word; we have the same faith, but it is founded upon a finished work and there the soul finds rest. Christ is risen. He, who was once offered for our offences, has been raised again that we may believe and be justified.

*J. N. Darby (“Collected Writings” 33:328)*

It is most important to see that faith is not a thing you can work up; it is really giving place to God and to the Lord in the heart so that He comes into the place of all the fears and misgivings, and the thing is settled. When God is brought into the heart the thing is settled.

*Charles A. Coates (“Outline of Matthew’s Gospel” p.140)*

References (given only so that any extract may be considered in its context, if desired) relate to the volumes stated as published by the Kingston Bible Trust, Wembley Gardens, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 9LX UK. The second extract given in this article is taken from “Ministry of J. B. Stoney” (New Series) Volume 5 page 317, also published by the Kingston Bible Trust.

This completes the extracts from Frank Purday’s Notebook

## THE GATES OF THE HOLY CITY

### Revelation 21:10-21

The city has twelve gates — there is complete accessibility. No matter from what point you approach the city, you find a gate. No one was ever so easy to approach as was Christ. He is like that still and it should be just as easy to approach those who believe on Him. The Lord teaches His people to put themselves at the service of the poorest and most needy. None were too lowly or too outcast for Christ to serve, and He encourages us to do the same. Often have heavily burdened souls found that they could approach Christians when they could approach no one else. How blessed to think that we may be accessible to any poor sinner who has a need and that it is for us to serve them and to tell them of the love of God. We are left here for that very purpose, that we give to any and every one the sweet light of Christ, and bring the gospel within the reach of all men.

There were three gates on each of the four sides that the gospel might go out to all, and that no one might have to go away because he could not find a gate. In the future day the city will be within the reach of the whole world, and all the nations will find easy access into the good of the city and into the blessing of God.

Another thing brought before us is that at the gates were twelve angels. Angels, though unseen, have a blessed service in guarding those who belong to Christ. We see here the perfection of providential care. Angels were constantly seen in the Jewish dispensation protecting, guarding and rendering some outward assistance to the Lord's earthly people. They still serve us, though unseen. We read in the epistle to the Hebrews: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out for service on account of those who shall inherit salvation?" The Lord, too, says of infants, "their angels in the heavens continually behold the face of my Father who is in the heavens" (Matthew 18:10). We little know how the objects of God's love are cared for in this way. Angels will have their recognition in a coming day. They are at the gates in the day of glory. They will escort the city when it descends from heaven. They will serve Christ and those who are Christ's. They will ever be at the bidding of Christ. They are "mighty in strength, that execute his word, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Psalm 103:20).

Further I would note that the gates are inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. God can never forget Israel. It is from them that we got our light at the beginning of the gospel, for the first preachers were all Israelites, and so, too, the first converts. Also the history of the children of Israel was written for our instruction. Further, there will not only be a wonderful heavenly rule in the day of glory, but there will be perfection in earthly administration by means of the twelve tribes of Israel, who will occupy the first place on earth, and form twelve great nations. Israel will get its greatness and glory from Christ through the heavenly Jerusalem. They will be the first to get the good and blessing of the holy city, and they in turn will become a blessing to the nations. They will love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves, and be the centre of blessing on earth.

Then, the twelve gates were twelve pearls. "Each of the gates, respectively, was one pearl". At whatever gate you approach its beauty strikes you. There was never such beauty seen in this world as was seen in Christ, but it needed anointed eyes to see it. In the eyes of the morally blinded Jews there was no beauty that they should desire Him. There was no halo round His head, as is falsely represented in pictures, but there was a moral halo, an indescribable moral beauty which at once marked Him off from every other man. See, for instance, how in contrast to the bitterest hatred round Calvary's cross, the beauty of His spirit shone out in the words, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Similar beauty marked the early christians. The words of Stephen when they were stoning him to death illustrate this: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

There is a beautiful spirit about christians who live and walk under the influence of Christ, which at once attracts those who are seeking light. The only approach to the city to get the good and blessing of it is by means of the gates of pearl, the beautiful testimony of Christ.

H. D'Arcy Champney

# **THAT CHRIST MIGHT HAVE THE FIRST PLACE IN ALL THINGS**

**Colossians 1:12-14 & 18-22;  
3:1-4 & 9-25;  
4:1-6**

**1 Corinthians 15:28**

I seek help of the Spirit of God to speak of Christ as presented in verse 18 of Colossians chapter 1:- “that he might have the first place in all things”. Worldly people often speak of getting priorities right and I would suggest that, for us as Christians, in getting our priorities right, Christ should have the first place with us. He has the first place with God. In Colossians chapters 3 and 4 we shall consider the ways in which this applies to us in the various circles and details of life.

The Colossian believers were commended for their faith and love. Hence the apostle was concerned that they might have a full understanding of the mysteries of God in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. However the Colossians were in danger of falling prey to philosophy and vain deceit, that is, the entrance of man’s mind in the things of God.

God has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. That is, He has brought us from the authority of darkness into a sphere of love and authority made known in His own beloved Son. “The Son of His love” is a unique title involving the peculiar place that He has in the Father’s affections. Yet He has brought us under His authority in order that the great thoughts of God in His purposes from the ages concerning the mystery should be brought about in those whom He is addressing in this epistle and, by extension, in ourselves.

We have been put in this favoured position, which includes every believer who knows the Lord Jesus as the Saviour — “in whom we have redemption”, having been redeemed by His precious blood, knowing the forgiveness of sins and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Now, “the kingdom of the Son of His love” is for our protection and our blessing. It will be displayed publicly in the world soon and what a change it will make in this scene. Now we anticipate what will be future, and enjoy something even greater as we are brought into the circle of affections of the Father and the Son.

“He (the Son) is before all, and all things subsist together by him. And he is the head of the body, the assembly; who is the beginning, firstborn from

among the dead, that he might have the first place in all things”. What God has in mind, is that Christ is going to fill the universe in blessing so that there may be an answer to the heart of God Himself. You will notice that Christ is referred to as the Head. He it is in whom all divine wisdom is resident. So there is no need to turn to man’s philosophy or thoughts. All the wisdom that we require is found in Christ. The problem in Colosse was that some were not holding the Head. We need to hold the Head; in other words, we need to draw our resources and our wisdom from Christ as the Head of the body, the assembly.

It is God’s thought that He should have the first place in all things! God has no small thoughts; they are very great involving the whole universe. God is going to have a universe that is wholly responsive to Himself and in accordance with His own thoughts. To bring that about it is essential that Christ, the Son of His love, should have the first place in all things and that has practical implications for us now.

Before we proceed to these practical implications I should refer to verse 19: “for in him all the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell”. Nothing can be added to that; God was there fully in Christ. All the fulness was pleased to dwell there. It was complacently there in our Lord Jesus, but the Godhead glory was behind the human veil. It is not only that all that the creature is capable of apprehending of God was in Christ, but all the fulness of God was in Christ.

Now it proceeds “and by him to reconcile all things to itself, having made peace by the blood of his cross — by him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens. And you, who once were alienated...”. Notice the “all things”. God has removed in the death of Christ the enmity and has removed the man through whom the enmity came into the scene. The death of Christ is the basis of all that God will yet display in Him as filling the first place in all things. We have the benefit of reconciliation now; the actual reconciliation of all things is yet future.

God will shortly display to a wondering universe the meek and lowly Jesus, who was rejected by men and crucified at Calvary. He shall fill the whole scene for God’s glory and He will solve every problem that besets this poor earth. Every moral question has been settled for God by our Lord Jesus at the cross. Soon the whole scene will be brought into subjection to Him. What then are your priorities and mine? Alas, even at the end of the millennial

reign men's hearts will remain unchanged. Nevertheless all things will be brought into subjection to Him, hence I have read 1 Corinthians 15:28 because it looks on to the eternal scene where God will secure finally what He has in mind, when God Himself will be all in all.

### **Christ First in All Things**

In chapter 3 of Colossians, I want to refer to those areas in which Christ should have the first place now. There is no accident in the sequence in which the apostle presents them. The first is to direct our minds to where Christ is sitting at God's right hand. Notice that it is our minds, not our hearts, that are to be occupied in this way. The mind is the avenue to the heart. We apprehend the things of God through the mind and then the heart is affected. The Colossians already had love but they were in danger in relation to their minds. So often our minds are the problem. The mind of man is where the enmity has arisen against God. Even Satan got in initially through the mind — "has God said?"

So the apostle says, "If ye have been raised with the Christ". You will notice the titles used in these passages. It is not always the same title. Christ is God's anointed. He is the Head, God's head for every man. He is the One who is going to bring everything into effect for God. So it says, "if ye have been raised with the Christ, seek the things which are above, where the Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God". Our minds are to be directed to the place that the Lord fills at the present time. He is sitting at the right hand of God, which is the place of power. He is the One through whom things are administered and will be administered publicly in the world to come. He is the One in whom everything is secured, "in him is the yea, and in him the amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

What do we know of the sphere where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God? In Colossians this is not quite the Ephesian level, where we are seated in the heavenlies. This is, using the Old Testament type, where we are 'over Jordan', i.e. typically raised with Christ, but not yet in possession of the land. God has in mind that we should be in possession of the land. Here, the priority is that our minds should be set on the things above where the Christ is, and not on the things that are on the earth "for ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God".

Where is your life? Speaking of priorities, what do we live in? We have to fulfill our responsibilities here; we are still in flesh and blood, but our life is

hid with Christ in God. That is where our life is. Well, is that true of us? How much time do we actually spend in relation to the things of Christ and the heavenly things where He is at God's right hand?

It is a challenge to my heart and no doubt to each one of us here as to where our minds are. God knows that we are not in conditions where we can be continually in the heavenly scene; but where do we resort when we are free from the responsibilities of life? Sometimes He sets dear believers aside so that they are freed from certain responsibilities, perhaps suffering in their bodies or circumstances, and you find that many have their minds set on the heavenly scene. First in priority is what belongs to the heavenly sphere.

“When the Christ is manifested who is our life, then shall ye also be manifested with him in glory.” At present our life is hid with Christ in God, but when He is manifested then our life will be with Him in glory in the scene of His glory, and we shall share with Him in glory. It is a wonderful thing to have this hope. Is it not worthwhile therefore to set our minds in relation to these things now?

“If ye are raised with Christ ... seek the things above ... ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God”, then why is it necessary that we should have to put certain things to death? We have not actually died, but can reckon ourselves so with Christ. These are matters that are entered into by faith and by the Spirit, but we are still down here actually and therefore need to put to death the deeds of the body.

Why was there a need to tell those in Colosse that have been raised with Christ not to lie to one another? Well, the apostle saw it was necessary and says, “Do not lie to one another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, renewed into full knowledge according to the image of him that has created him”.

What do we know about “putting on the new”? Here new means fresh or youthful. Then it is renewed; meaning that it is completely different, from a different source. It is a new order of things that has been brought to light through our Lord Jesus Christ. The old has been set aside, crucified. Then we have to put it off from our side. As far as God is concerned, He does not look at us according to what we are in the old man; He looks at us according to what we are in Christ. Then the practical test comes as to whether we are in keeping with His view of us. So we have to learn to put certain things off in the power of the Holy Spirit, to think as belonging to the new man, and to

view things as God views them.

The passage continues, "...Wherein there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision..." There is no Greek, no intellectual, no Jew, no religious man. Circumcision and uncircumcision do not enter into it. All these human distinctions have to go. Then it adds "barbarian, Scythian" — I am not quite sure what these two would refer to — then "bondman, freeman". Someone might boast in being a free man, even Paul did that. Then there are those who might be burdened by being bondmen. Well, it is good if we are bondmen of the Lord. All these human distinctions have disappeared; they belong to the old order of man. God has brought in a completely new order. It is after the image of Him that has created Him, where "Christ is everything, and in all".

God has in mind that everything must take its character from Christ. At the moment there are the christian concerns and the trials of the way, but as we work out these things practically and as Christ has the first place in our hearts then Christ is everything and in all. "Christ in you the hope of glory" comes into Colossians 1:27: Christ in each one of us, so that Christ in this sphere is everything and in all.

### **Christ First in the circle of the Saints**

Now the next sphere I would like to refer to is that of the christian company, where we are told to put on certain things. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion". God views us as His elect, and holy and beloved. Well, is it true of us? Naturally speaking there is nothing special about us. God is sovereign in His election. Why did He choose you? Why did He choose me? Why did He bypass someone else? It will all come out in glory. What a God we have to do with — He knows! However, it is right that we should esteem each other as the elect of God.

Then we have to put on bowels of compassion. Consider the compassions of Jesus, how He stretched out His hand to touch the leper and said, "I will, be thou cleansed" (Mark 1:41). How Jesus felt in relation to all that lay upon humanity! Then kindness and lowliness; who could be more lowly than the blessed Son of God? His appeal is to come and learn from Him, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). Next, there is "long-suffering". Well, I suppose few of us are long-suffering, at least, one speaks for oneself. Think of the long-suffering of God with each one of us as He works to form us in the features of Christ.

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any should have a complaint against any, even as the Christ has forgiven you”. Any complaints here? How much have you been forgiven? How much have I been forgiven? Forgiving here means, “freely forgive” as in Luke 7:42. Maybe we are like Simon the Pharisee; we think we are just 50 pence debtors. The woman was the 500 pence debtor in Simon’s mind, but she was forgiven much, for she loved much.

Then, “so also do ye. And to all these add love, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts”. What is the peace of Christ? We read in John’s gospel, “I leave peace with you; I give my peace to you” (John 14:27). The Lord Jesus moved through this scene in perfect peace in His relations with His God and Father. Nothing could disturb that peace. Do we have peace like that? “I give my peace to you”. Things arise which do disturb us but we are called to know the peace of the Christ which passes knowledge. May it preside in our hearts.

Then we read here, “To which also ye have been called in one body”. It is the circle of believers that is in mind here. Then it adds, “and be thankful”. We have so much to be thankful for, sometimes we do not realise how much. Do we thank God every day for His wonderful, sovereign mercy that took us up in the first place? Thank Him for the mercies which He bestows upon us all the way through? I think the key to this section is, “even as the Christ”. Christ is first in God’s thoughts in relation to all these things and He is the Pattern from whom we learn.

Then verse 16 begins, “Let the word of the Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs”. Where does it come from? It comes from Himself. This paragraph is, perhaps, a little different from what we have just been considering. It is what is working out now in the circle of believers and all proceeding from the One who has to have the first place in all things. If He has the first place these things will proceed happily, but if He does not have the first place you will hear the complaints: ‘There is no food!’ or ‘There is not this, or there is not that’. But Paul is beseeching “And everything, whatever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus”. If things are done in the name of the Lord Jesus they should be done as He would do them.

Then, there is, “singing with grace in your hearts”. If there were more grace

with us there would be fewer problems. Then it says here, “giving thanks to God the Father by Him”. Oh, that there might be more in response to God the Father, giving thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus. See how He fills the first place to lead the response to the Father who has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Giving Christ His true place results in a full response and an answer to the heart of God.

### **Christ First in the family circle**

Christ having the first place also applies in the family circle. Christianity is not something which applies only for a Lord’s Day, or when we are gathered together. Christianity applies in the family circle at home and when Christ has the first place there things are worked out happily.

Firstly there is the word to the wives as to subjection. You will notice now that the title is changed. No longer, “in Christ” but “as is fitting in the Lord”. That is, the Lord’s authority applies in this sphere. It is the same Person but with authority stressed when He is beseeching for subjection. “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord”. That might seem to be a bit difficult. Maybe you feel that your parents are being too strict. Well, obey them because the Lord will be pleased if you do. You may ask, ‘Why are my parents saying this to me?’ It is because they are considering for the Lord. Therefore obey them because it is well pleasing to the Lord. Yes, I know we have all kicked against this at some time or other. All these things are very practical. Then it goes on, “Fathers, do not vex your children, to the end that they be not disheartened.” Well, perhaps there are fathers who know what that means.

### **Christ First in Employment or Business**

Next it speaks to bondmen. You will notice that it speaks to bondmen before it speaks to the masters. I do not know why that is. Perhaps it is more difficult to be in the place of a bondman. “Bondmen, obey in all things your masters according to flesh; not with eye-services, as men-pleasers, but in simplicity of heart, fearing the Lord”. Notice these words, fearing the Lord. It may be that a master asks you to do something that you cannot do as fearing the Lord; that would be the only time when you would not obey your master.

Bondmen refers to bond-slaves here, but I suppose most know what it is to

serve a master, at some time or other. I am speaking about a master in the world. Then, if you are asked to do something you cannot do in the fear of the Lord, you will have the Lord's support in refusing, but, normally, you should obey and labour at it heartily, as doing it unto the Lord. Thus you would be a conscientious employee. So in every circle of life the Lord is to have the first place and if we have the Lord before us everything else will find its true place.

“Whatsoever ye do, labour at it heartily, as doing it to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance”. Maybe the master does not pay you too well. Maybe you do not get the reward you think you deserve, but it is an encouragement that, if you do it heartily as doing it unto the Lord knowing that you will get something far better, you will get the inheritance. So that should encourage us. So do it as well as you can but do it with the Lord as your object. Of course, if it is a believer you are working for they will benefit as well and so the Lord benefits in all things.

Then it says “For he that does a wrong shall receive the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons”. Men have respect of persons, but with God there is no respect of persons; only one Person fills the eye of God and that is Christ and He intends that He should fill our hearts too.

The next word is to the masters, “Masters, give to bondmen what is just and fair, knowing that ye also have a Master in the heavens.” This is addressed to believers who are masters. If you have a Master in the heavens you will not be working according to men's way of business; you do it as fulfilling righteousness. You consider how your Master has treated you. Often in the Gospels the disciples addressed the Lord Jesus as Master. They owned Him as One who had claims over them. If you are a master you would recognise that while you may be a master down here you have someone who has a claim over you. So we find that in every sphere in which God has set us, Christ is to have the first place in all things.

### **Prayer for the Work concerning the Mystery of the Christ**

The apostle continues, “Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us also, that God may open to us a door of the word to speak the mystery of Christ, on account of which also I am bound; to the end that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak”.

Why does the apostle place his desire for their prayers after the exhortations of the previous chapter? His great concern is that the saints should be established in the truth of the mystery, but I think these other things have to be worked out first. The apostle values the prayers of believers, and anyone who is called to serve, no matter how small the service, greatly values the prayers of other believers. It is not for his own sake, it is in order that God may open the door to the word. It is God who opens the door, and operates in men's hearts by the word in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore persevere in prayer and not forget the thanksgiving.

The object of prayer here is the mystery of the Christ. What a wonderful thing it is that One of the Godhead should come into manhood to secure a vessel for His own heart and secure the universe for God! May we grasp the greatness of Christ's work and the place He fills.

### **Wisdom in Testimony**

"Walk in wisdom towards those without". Wisdom comes from Christ as Head, so we have the resources in Christ and the Spirit of God to walk in wisdom in relation to those without. Who are those without? When this was written there would be the Church of God, the Jewish synagogue and the temples of idols. Then it would mean those who did not form part of the christian company. We are not in these days now. Today, as a result of our unfaithfulness, and the unfaithfulness throughout the ages, you could not, in any place, identify the Church of God as such publicly. So I think he means those who are not believers.

However the word would equally apply when we come in contact with other believers; we have to walk in wisdom. How much need there is for wisdom at the present time in this day of scattering. Then there is the need of wisdom when children at school are taught the equality of religions and other such things. What a need there is for wisdom in speaking to those without!

The apostle speaks of, "redeeming opportunities". Sometimes there is an opportunity to speak to souls, thank God. Maybe these opportunities are becoming fewer but if there is an opportunity we are to "Let your word be always with grace". What came into expression in the Lord Jesus was grace and truth. Some might like to make it truth and grace but it says "grace and truth" in John 1:17. Then "let it be always with grace seasoned with salt". That is, your attitude is one of grace towards all but it may be that salt is needed, that is, stating the truth. When that is necessary we do need wisdom.

Oh, that we might acquire more wisdom in our contact with others.

### **God's Great Objective**

In 1 Corinthians 15:28 we have one of the very few verses in scripture that refers to what is eternal, but is not developed here. Revelation 21 is the other Scripture that draws the curtain aside in relation to what is eternal. In our present condition we are not suited to enter into eternal conditions, but God gives us a sufficient glimpse by the Spirit to understand the glory and wonder of the eternal scene. In that scene Christ is placed in subjection so that God may be all in all.

Christ will reign until He has put all things under His feet. Even in the millennium all things will not be completely subjected until the end when God deals with the final uprising of men after Satan is released. The millennium will be a glorious display of what God has accomplished in Christ, maintained by His rule in righteousness, but at the end natural man's heart is unchanged apart from God's intervention in grace. Then when all things are put in subjection to the Son the last enemy to be annulled is death, and as we know from Revelation, death and Hades are cast into the lake of fire. Then the Son is placed in subjection in order that God may be all in all.

We can only marvel at the wisdom of God as displayed in the administration of the mystery, that the Son, Who is the mediator, should take this subservient position, though in His Person never ceasing to be God. At the present time Christ is to be everything and in all. In the eternal scene God will be all and in all.

May our hearts be encouraged to have our priorities right and see what God has in Christ and the practical working out of it in every sphere of life in which He has set us. Whether it is amongst the saints or in the family circle or in relation to men, may we be helped to put Christ first, and may He become everything and all to us. May it be so for His name's sake.

*Donald Macphail*

*An Address at Chippenham,*