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# *Living Water*

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# *Living Water* — Issue No. 69

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## **Recent Ministry**

|  | <b>Page</b>         |
|--|---------------------|
| MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES – PERGAMOS<br>Continuing the series based on Bible readings in Bromley. | <b>1</b>            |
| FOUR THRONES   | David Bond <b>3</b> |

## **Poetry Selection**

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| THE WHITE STONE  | Edward Bevir <b>11</b>       |
| SONG OF CREATION | Caedmon <b>12</b>            |
| CLOSE TO THEE    | Mrs. Bessie Barter <b>12</b> |

## **Testimony Section**

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| A PERSONAL TESTIMONY | Patricia Faulkner <b>13</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|

## **A voice from the past**

|                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST           | J. N. Darby <b>15</b>    |
| INTERESTING PERSONS IN THE EYE OF GOD | Frank Woodford <b>18</b> |

## **A word for today**

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| LEVITICUS<br>Continuing this series on the first five books of the Bible. | Malcolm Biggs <b>23</b> |
|---|-------------------------|

## MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES 3 — PERGAMOS

**“And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write: These things says he that has the sharp two-edged sword:**

**“I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas my faithful witness was, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against thee: that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat of idol sacrifices and to commit fornication. So thou also hast those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes in like manner. Repent therefore: but if not, I come to thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth.**

**“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna; and I will give to him a white stone and a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it.”** Revelation 2:12-17

At Pergamos the problem identified was that of error developing within the church itself. Satan had got in and was bringing in things that imitate what is right, but which are actually false. There was the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes held by some in the company. Bad practice is bad enough but when it is systematised into a doctrine, a set of supposed principles, it becomes much more dangerous.

In answer to these conditions, the Lord presents Himself to this company as the One who has the sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth. It shows that there is decisive power with the Lord to meet everything with His word. We are told elsewhere that the word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword”. The Lord singles out here those that hold false doctrine and says that unless there is repentance He will make war with them with the sword of His mouth. The Lord expects what is right to be maintained in the church but if this is not so He has the right to act Himself. It is very salutary if the Lord takes direct action to preserve the company and those who are true within it.

There were two false systems at work in Pergamos: one was the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes and Scripture, apart from telling us that it was something that the Lord hated, is silent about what it was; the other is the doctrine of Balaam. For

this latter we can deduce something of what it was from what we are told about Balaam here, and in other parts of Scripture. For instance we read: “Lo, these, through the counsel of Balaam, caused the children of Israel to commit sin against Jehovah in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague on the assembly of Jehovah” (Numbers 31:16); “because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor, of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee” (Deuteronomy 23:4); “having left the straight way they have gone astray, having followed in the path of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15); “Woe to them! because they have gone in the way of Cain, and given themselves up to the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 1:11).

These scriptures speak for themselves. Balaam was willing to distort God’s word for his own ends and he caused the children of Israel to commit sin. The failure recorded in Numbers 25, where the “people began to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab” (Numbers 25:1), was the outcome of Balaam’s work. To bring it up to date, Balaam’s doctrine would promote worldly and unclean influences in the church and alliances with unbelievers. Balaam also sought to frustrate God’s objective for His people. He knew that God had blessed Israel but even so he would bring in things which caused Israel to sin. He was hired from outside and he brought corruption within. As we read here in the address to Pergamos, he “cast a snare” before God’s people. That encapsulates the evil that he did as ensnaring persons.

There are three promises made to the overcomer: to eat of the hidden manna; be given a “white stone”; and be given a new name (written on the white stone).

The “hidden manna” does not refer to the manna spread around the camp of Israel in the wilderness, which the people were to gather each day for food, but rather to the manna kept in the pot in the ark. It speaks of the remembrance of a suffering Christ down here and of Christ as ever before God in all the worth of His lowly pathway here. To eat of the hidden manna looks on to what is future, though of course what Christ is before God may be enjoyed by the believer now in measure and is to be for our encouragement and blessing.

The “white stone” is also something to be received in the future and will be a mark of the Lord’s approval. Equally, in so far as we have a sense of His approval now, this is something which we can have at least some sense of at

present. The word used here for “white stone” does not occur in this sense anywhere else in scripture. A white stone was (among other things) used at public games to be given to the victor. It is a promise of the Lord to the one who overcomes — to the victor. It is a sign of the Lord’s approval and it was on the victor’s stone that the name was written. All this looks on to the future but if we have any sense of the Lord’s approval, so something of the character of the white stone can be enjoyed now.

Finally, there is the name written. It has been spoken of as a name so intimate that even other members of the family do not know it. It is very remarkable that it says, “which no one knows but he that receives it”. Clearly, the satisfaction of having the name does not rest in others knowing it or it being a public witness of the Lord’s approval. It is something we have to enjoy with the Lord alone.

Based on a Bible reading at Bromley, Kent, November 2002.

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Pergamos, modern Bergama, in Turkey was a centre of Emperor worship in Roman times and also of the cults of Zeus, Athena, and Dionysus. This gives special point to the Lord’s word to them about dwelling where Satan’s throne is.

### **FOUR THRONES**

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Isaiah</b>     | <b>16: 5</b>  |
| <b>Hebrews</b>    | <b>4: 14</b>  |
| <b>Hebrews</b>    | <b>8: 1</b>   |
| <b>Revelation</b> | <b>20: 11</b> |

You will notice the description given to these thrones of which we have read:

the first is a throne of mercy;  
the second a throne of grace;  
the third a throne of greatness; and,  
the fourth is a throne of judgment.

I trust that everyone here will know the blessing of the first three and will be saved from the terrible judgment of the fourth. God has in mind in the preaching this might be so. He is long-suffering not willing that any should

perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

The One who sits upon these thrones is the same Person. He is on the throne of mercy that He might dispense it to those who are prepared to accept that they are sinners in the sight of God. That is the basis of the gospel. We have to realise that we are fallen creatures. However fair creation may look, it is all tainted by sin. It entered by one man: “by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death passed upon all men” (Romans 5:12). That is an incontrovertible fact. People may argue and put forward their various theories and philosophies but Scripture makes things plain for us.

If we are to get blessing tonight we need to accept God’s word. All have sinned and come short of His glory (see Romans 3:23). No creature could attain to the standard before Him except One blessed Man. He indeed is the One who set forth the standard of God’s glory and maintained it inviolate to the end.

It is that glorious Person of whom I wish to speak. He is the One who fills the throne and He is available tonight on the throne of mercy, sitting upon it, “in truth, one judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness”. What a glorious Person we have to do with. He is not dispensing judgment, (He will do that in a day to come) but He is dispensing blessing to whosoever will.

Are you prepared therefore to accept before Him your place as a sinner? It is the place of blessing but it is a very humiliating place. Remember the younger son in the parable Jesus told in Luke’s gospel chapter 15? He had to be brought to feel his wretchedness. It took him a long time. He had previously enjoyed the father’s home but “gathering all together went away into a country a long way off” and “there dissipated his property, living in debauchery”. What a picture of Great Britain! What a terrible place of moral decadence it is.

You can be carried along in the current of Satan’s activities and he will give you, maybe, a time of excitement here but he will bring you to a Christ-less eternity. God would rescue you tonight through the preaching that you may be saved. Realise that before God you are a sinner, you are under judgment, but there is a provision for you in the work of Christ whereby you may be

saved from your doom.

God sets forth Christ as a “mercy-seat, through faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of his righteousness” (Romans 3: 25). Oh how wonderful the gospel is! That mercy seat is displayed to the universe. In the Old Testament period the mercy-seat was hidden behind a veil and the only person to see it was the high priest who went in to the holy of holies once a year. Now, in the present dispensation, the mercy-seat has been set forth so that whosoever will can avail themselves of the blood that has been put upon it, the blood of God’s own Son!

Our blessing has been purchased at infinite cost to the blessed God, and infinite cost to the blessed Saviour who is appealing to your heart. It meant that He had to surrender His precious life that He might effect redemption because God required a sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice, and only Jesus could provide it. He came for that very purpose. He stepped into manhood, He who was God over all, blessed for ever (Romans 9:5). By Him the whole creation was made: “upholding all things by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3). Yet He also made purification for sins, involving His descent into manhood and into death.

His life was perfect. We read in Zechariah 6:12 of Christ, typified as the Branch, growing up in His own place. How delightful was the life of Jesus to God. The law was hid in His heart; it was a lamp unto His feet, a light to His path (see Psalm 119:11, 105). He fulfilled the law — the only Man that ever could. God’s law condemned every other person and it will condemn you tonight. If you are trying to merit salvation, you are on a hopeless course.

That is why the throne of mercy is so needed. The One who is sitting upon it is the One who accomplished the work whereby the sinner can go free. Those who believe are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). What a firm foundation has been laid. It was laid there in the work effected at Calvary. He suffered as a victim in relation to sin. Man had done his worst; he had put Him upon the cross. As we sing: ‘Man the cross to him awarded, Man the Saviour crucified; This world’s judgment stands recorded...’

Every voice was raised in casting out the Son of God. He came to claim His



inheritance and He was refused it. “This is the heir: come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours” (Mark 12:7). That has been the language of the world ever since. It is the language of the world at the present time, building up a system in which they do not want God and they do not want Christ. God will bring His judgment upon it and smash it all. Meanwhile He is restraining His hand of judgment in order that there may be forgiveness for guilty sinners like us. Will you avail yourself of what Jesus has done at Calvary? All the waves and billows of God’s wrath passed over His blessed head as He suffered the just for the unjust that He may bring us to God (1 Peter 3: 18). What a terrible moment it was when Jesus bore God’s judgment. The hymn expresses something of its awfulness:

‘No eye was found to pity,  
No heart to bear Thy woe,  
But shame, and scorn, and spitting;  
None cared Thy Name to know  
‘O day of greatest sorrow,  
Day of unfathomed grief!  
When Thou didst taste the horror  
Of wrath without relief.’

The judgment fell in full force upon His blessed head. He was able to bear it and complete the work that was given Him to do. What suffering it meant for Him. No wonder at that awful hour He could cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1).

Sinner, you must answer that! This is the ground of blessing, to accept you are a sinner and that Jesus has died for you and shed His precious blood. God will not justify you because you are a good church-goer, come to christian meetings or claim some religious denomination. He will justify you if you are of the faith of Jesus.

The Man who suffered for you at Calvary’s cross has been raised and glorified at God’s right hand. He is able to dispense mercy because He is on the throne of mercy. Divine favour is toward you tonight in order that you may avail yourself of the blessing that God provides. It is with the heart that you believe unto righteousness, and confession made unto salvation (Romans 10:10).

Christ was taken out of the depths of death and put at the very pinnacle of power and glory in heaven. He is the great administrator of divine blessing. “Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

As believing you come into the gain of the kingdom, a rule of blessing and favour into which God desires to introduce you. When you come into it you find there is every help available. Do not think that because you accept Jesus as your Saviour that you will go happily on the way to glory without any troubles. In Romans 5, we see that immediately His favour is known, it speaks about tribulations, endurance and experience. But instead of those things being depressing, God intends them in His ways, to develop moral fibre.

The christian’s path is often one of difficulty but it is also one of blessing. As you take the divinely appointed way you will find there are resources on hand to help. That is why I read in Hebrews 4 because there we read about the throne of grace. It says, “Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace”. This was written to believers who had been discouraged and were down-cast, so the apostle writes to encourage them that they might lay hold of what they had believed.

It says, “Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we have not a high priest not able to sympathise with our infirmities”. He knows just what we are like. He knows the ups and downs of daily life, family life, troubles, tests and trials; He knows about it all because He has been here. He was here, “tempted in all things in like manner”, but “sin apart”. He was perfect in all things. The Spirit of God always guards the perfection of Jesus. He was never marked by self will, by disobedience, or by pleasing Himself. It says, “the Christ also did not please himself” (Romans 15:3). His life was led in perfect devotion to His God. In the morning His ear was opened to hear what His Father would say to Him. He went out in service to preach the glad tidings, heal the sick, raise the dead, and give sight to the blind; in all He had in view that God may be glorified. That was the life of Jesus.

In it all He had to endure the constant opposition of those who were opposed

to Him. I wonder at the path of Jesus: He “endured so great contradiction from sinners against himself” (Hebrews 12:3). How testing it must have been to Him to meet those religious leaders who would oppose Him. Yet the brightest truth was opened out amidst the greatest opposition. In John’s gospel we see how they were all against Him, yet how wonderfully His teaching shines out. In John 5 for instance He says, “even as the Father raises the dead and quickens them, thus the Son also quickens whom he will ... It is the Spirit which quickens” (John 5:21, 6:63). All was spoken against a background of unbelief and hostility.

He is able to bring help and support to us in the pathway here from the throne of grace: “Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace”. “Receive mercy”, is unmerited favour, and “grace” is love acting in circumstances of difficulty. We shall not need grace in heaven but we need it here every day.

When we come to Hebrews 8, we have another throne. Some might question what this has to do with the gospel but it has very much to do with it. “We have such a one high priest who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of the greatness in the heavens”. It shows the exaltation of Christ. That is what is proceeding up there! That is what christianity is — not a system of domination and legal observance but that you might come into the enjoyment of serving God. Christ is in office up there and He is “minister of the holy places”.

He has not passed through a theological college or examinations in divinity. He does not want you to go that way either. He has given you the best dress you could possibly have. He clothes us in the best robe (see Luke 15). What is the good of having a priestly robe that is provided by man when God gives the very best? “Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it”. It is provided that we might be suitable as sons to serve Him in praise.

Therefore you come into this wonderful realm where He is Minister of the holy places and, “of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man”. It is outside of man’s apprehension but made known to those who have the gift of the Spirit and come into what the Lord has established.

Are you amongst those who have received the gift of God’s Spirit? He is available to you and if you are a believer in Jesus you should receive the gift

of the Holy Spirit. Repentance towards God, faith in Christ Jesus and then the gift of the Spirit is the divine order; “the Holy Spirit also, which God has given to those that obey him” (Acts 5:32). That is the obedience of faith, in which you find yourself amongst those who are engaged and occupied in the praises of God. I appeal to you that you might enter into it. God has a place for you in His house that you might serve Him. That is the great end in the gospel. Not only that you may be relieved from your liabilities: so many preach that and leave it at that, but it is that you might enter into a place where God can be served in the liberty and joy of sonship.

Then there is the reference to the “true tabernacle”, not made by hands but made by Christ. It is persons who make the temple and you come into the enjoyment of all that God provides for those that love Him and desire to serve Him.

Be delivered from anything that speaks of man. Find out where the rights of the Lord are acknowledged and where the presence of the Spirit is known and enjoyed and you will find yourself in a realm of which Christ is the Sun and Centre. It is the great end in the gospel, that you may be found amongst a praising company.

Finally, we come to the last throne. As I said at the outset, I trust that no one in this room will ever find their place there. No believer will be at the great white throne. Revelation is the harvest book, gathering up evil and also good.

Here we have the last grand assize. It is a great white throne. It suggests absolute purity; there is no corruption in this judgment. There will be no person who can evade the judgment. The advocates today attempt to get persons off, even if they are guilty. Nothing of that will apply to this throne. No one can appear there for you. It is the throne for the unbelieving dead.

We read: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and place was not found for them”. Think of that, the whole scene removed, everything that man could trust in, everything that he could think was stable and secure was all gone and there is this great white throne. “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne”. No one is too important to appear there and no one is too insignificant either. Books are opened and those who stand before

the great white throne will be judged according to their works. Everything that they have done will be exposed to the judgment of God.

Think of the solemnity of it. The One who sits upon the throne is One before whom earth and heaven fled. He will administer judgment to those who have not availed themselves of the glad tidings of God's grace. Men say that death is the end and they like to think it. One of the great men said that death is a long sleep from which there is no awaking. God tells us quite clearly that there is the resurrection of the dead.

Do not leave it too late. There is time tonight to repent and come into blessing. The persons who stand at the great white throne left it too late and they will be there in all their guilt.

God is infinitely fair and He searches the books. "Books were opened; and another book was opened, which is that of life. And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books according to their works". Oh, I trust you will believe the severe warnings of Scripture. This is written that we may be warned of the consequences of despising the gospel of God's grace which has cost Him so much. He spared not His Son but delivered Him up for us all. You may have spurned it until now but there is an opportunity tonight to close with God's offer of mercy. If you come to the first throne, the throne of mercy, you will never come to the last.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hades gave up the dead which were in them". Then it says, "death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire". What an awful place of torment it will be. Persons will dwell eternally upon the fact that they missed opportunities for blessing.

You can repent at the throne of mercy but you cannot repent at the great white throne. The time is fixed. The Lord would have you tonight to close with God's offer of mercy and come into the blessing that He provides, to know the joy and peace of believing, for His name's sake.

*David Bond*

*A preaching of the gospel, Croydon, 4 May 2003*

## THE WHITE STONE

**“A white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”**

Revelation 2:17.

Knowest thou the great almighty Lord  
Who wields the sharp and two-edged sword  
Keen and dividing? He alone  
Shall write thy name upon the stone.

What can this little token be?  
Approval, honour, liberty?  
Hopes of the faithful satisfied?  
It means them all, and more beside

The secret writing of His hand  
None but thyself shall understand;  
His patience, grace and constant care,  
Learnt by the soul in trial here.

So Mary, when in foolish haste  
The twelve condemned the seeming waste;  
The Master knew that happy part,  
And secret purpose of her heart.

He who has counted all thy tears,  
And counselled thee amid thy fears,  
And every thought and motive known  
Shall write thy name upon the stone.  
Inscribed in gold upon the white,  
Tis love and mercy infinite!

*Edward Bevir*

## SONG OF CREATION

Now ought we to praise  
The maker of the universe.

The might of the Creator,  
And His ingenuity  
The deeds of the God of Glory;

How He existed,  
Since He is everlasting God,  
Maker of all wonders.

He first in His almighty power  
To care for the children of men,  
Set heaven like the gable of a roof,  
And then the earth around.

*Caedmon (died 680)*

Caedmon is said to be the first English Christian poet. According to Bede (673 – 735) Caedmon sang poems about the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord, the justice and mercy of God, the last judgment and songs based on many incidents in the Bible. The only song that has survived is the one given above which was recorded by Bede in his “History of the English Church and People”. This history was completed in 731.

## CLOSE TO THEE

Lord Jesus, keep us close to Thee  
Along our pilgrim way,  
That we may restful be where naught  
Of human power can sway.

O may we true and faithful be  
As on our way we go  
Amid the shadows gathering round  
And stormy winds that blow!

For Thou art leading upward still,  
And we would following be,  
To where no mind of man can come  
At home, blest Lord, with Thee.

*Mrs Bessie Barter*

### **A PERSONAL TESTIMONY**

I became a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ quite late in my life in June 1996, although, had I been asked, I would have said that I was a christian long before that. My idea of a christian was to simply be a good caring person, but the Bible says, 'You must be born again'.

I did not have a christian background but I did learn something about Jesus as a child in religious education classes at school.

During my teenage years I trained to be a nurse and midwife and I occasionally went to the hospital chapel. I then learned more of Jesus and knew that He had died on the cross for sinners. I did not consider myself to be a sinner. After qualifying I married and had three children and it was many years before I went to church again.

After several years working as a nurse I began to do some work for the Prison Service and now I thought I had met with the sinners that Jesus died for. I began to attend the Prison Chapel to encourage the inmates to go, as I thought that they needed saving. Later I was appointed as a Magistrate and again, here I was dealing with the sins of others.

Life began to change dramatically when I became ill with a tumour that was thought to be malignant. At the same time my husband urgently needed a triple heart bypass. Our son also became severely depressed and began to drink heavily and my father had a terminal illness.

Coping with all this was incredibly hard. I began to pray constantly. I knew that God was the only One who could really deal with it all and in faith I accepted that He would answer my prayers.

I bought a Bible so that I could learn how to pray properly. As I searched the scriptures I kept reading promises that whatever you ask for in prayer



if you believe it will come to pass (See Mark 11:23-24).

On my five-mile drive into town each day, I passed four churches and I began to slow down to read the Bible verses on their notice boards. One day, one of them read, "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). I could not forget it. I knew this was Jesus and the message was for me.

I started to go to church and I went to a few different ones. Not all of them told me what I wanted to know, so I moved on. Eventually I went into a place where most of the people were full of joy and I somehow knew that they had what I was looking for. They had peace that I did not have. I kept going there, as I wanted to be with them. One Sunday morning the message was about the Ten Commandments and how we had all broken them and therefore were sinners. I became very troubled about my own sins. I knew the message was for me. I knew I was not right with God. In the evening the message was continued and how we could be made right with God through Jesus Christ the Saviour. The word was from John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life...he that believeth not is condemned already..."

The Lord opened my heart as I realised that Jesus was my Saviour too. I did believe that Jesus had shed His blood on the cross for my sins. He had taken my place and my sins were laid upon Him. I came to Him in faith and repentance and I know that I am right with God because of Jesus my Lord and my Saviour. My life now belongs to Him and my aim is to serve Him.

My prayers were answered; my tumour was benign and my husband had a successful heart bypass. Our son recovered from his depression and my father came to know the Lord before he died and is now in a much better place with Him.

I thank the Lord for His mercy and grace in drawing me to Himself and causing me to recognise my need of a Saviour

I am a sinner saved by God's free grace for His praise and glory.

*Patricia Faulkner*

## THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST

(Extracts from the writings of J. N. Darby)

**“We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ”** (Romans 14:10).

**“We shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in the body”** (2 Corinthians 5:10).

It is true that we (all believers) shall all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ: everything must be brought out there. But even so, I am like Himself! What is He going to judge? How do I get there at all? Because Christ has come and fetched me. I am going, He said to His disciples, “to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also”. So that when I come to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, it is because Christ has so loved me that He has come to fetch me there; and in what condition? I am in glory before I get to the judgment-seat. Everything there will be brought out, and with immense profit and gain to us. We shall know right and wrong then as we are known. We shall be manifested, but manifested before Him who is in the presence of God as the warrant of our salvation. *(From: “As is the Heavenly” JND Collected Writings Vol. 16 pages 356/7)*

We must then, all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, before the Person who by His death put away all my sins. What a blessing to find Him on the judgment-seat! There is nothing in this to disturb the peace He has made by the blood of His cross; and peace we must have in order to enjoy communion with God. Can two walk together, except they are agreed?

Then think how we get there. Christ will come and receive me to Himself, because He loves me, and wants me to be with Him where He is; and how do I arrive? Glorified in a body like His own. Do you ask, ‘How can people speak thus?’ I answer by the question, ‘How can you be in heaven any other way?’ He who of God is made unto us righteousness is the judge. To believe in His name and yet doubt that we have peace, is calling in question the value of His work. He who suffered and is now glorified will not gainsay it when He judges. But then there will be nothing secret – all will come to light. What a lesson for us when in glory! And what is the effect? I look on my past life, and what I have been. I look since I have been a Christian, and what feebleness, what failure! But am I therefore to be afraid? No: I look at God and say, What a God I have had to do with!

Every step is a manifestation of my Father's love, who has led me along the way. In glory I shall see all my foolishness, but it will be in the body risen or changed. I shall learn the love of Christ in every detail of my life from beginning to end. *(From: "The Sufferings and Praises of Christ" JND Collected Writings Vol. 16 page 83)*

We shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, but we shall appear in glory. It is not then our eternal state has to be settled and judgment pronounced whether we are saved or lost: we shall be glorified when we get there. Paul has been with Christ these 1800 years; are you going to bring him out to have his case settled? We shall give an account of everything to God from the time we were born, but we shall be in glory when we give it. We have an account to render as Christians, for we are responsible as to how far we have glorified Christ with the gifts and all that He has given us; and as to how far also we have grieved the Holy Spirit who has dwelt in us; but it is the saved who give this account... *(From "On the Government of God and His Counsels in Grace" JND Collected Writings Vo. 32 page 243)*

In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes by His grace we are dead. But then, if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God towards us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time. The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and how He raised you up again, how you were drawing near danger and shame and how He by His own arm interposed. *(From: "Judgment-seat of God and of Christ" JND Collected Writings Vol. 23 page 369)*

"We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). But the Christian has, through grace, anticipated this. He has recognised by divine teaching that condemnation is his own portion; he knows that in him, that is in his flesh, dwells no good thing; he has said in spirit, "enter

not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified” .

In a word the sentence of the day of judgment has passed upon his soul by faith. He knows that he that believes not is condemned already; and he has applied to himself the sentence: “there is none righteous, no one”; he has gone further... and learned that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God”. In a word, he has recognised, by a divine work in his own soul, what sin is before God as the judgment seat will show it...

...Judgment begins when Christ appears. “He shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” but, “when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). We are “conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). We have borne the image of the earthly, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:49). What is judgment, if we are completely like the judge, and He Himself our righteousness? And the knowledge of this is applied to our present happiness in this world. “Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). *(From: “What do the Scriptures Teach Concerning Judgment to Come?” JND Collected Writings Vol. 10 pages 375/6)*

“We shall all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ” ‘How are we all to be manifested?’ All will give an account of themselves (believers when they are caught up to be with the Lord, the wicked at the end of the millennium). The saints give account of themselves in glory. What is there to be judged in the saint? He is identified with the very principle that will judge, if he is in the righteousness of God. What was there to judge? Conscience is not awakened by it at all for the believer, for that is purged; but it does awaken something. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” There is not only righteousness but love. He sees the terror of judgment; the sight of the righteousness that judges is the occasion why he sets about preaching to others. It put love in activity, and then he adds another thing:” We are manifest unto God”, not, ‘we shall be’. I stand in the presence of the glory now, and whatever does not suit that glory is judged now. It acts on the conscience in the way of self judgment. *(From: “We have this Treasure” JND Collected Writings Vol. 16 page 363)*

WHAT will it be with God to dwell,  
And there to gaze on Jesus' face!  
To meet the One we've known so well  
As Priest and Saviour – in that place!

Before Christ's judgment-seat to stand,  
With Him look back on all the way;  
To learn the meaning, at His hand,  
Of every deed in every day.

Clearer than ever shall we see  
The grace that God our Saviour showed,  
The love that led so faithfully  
Along the pathless desert road.

How blessèd when this time is o'er,  
To find that love had all sufficed,  
And there upon the heavenly shore  
We reach the day of Jesus Christ!  
*(Mrs M. Carlsson-Carren)*

## INTERESTING PERSONS IN THE EYE OF GOD

**“And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: a hundred and seventy-five years. And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and full of days; and was gathered to his peoples.”**

Genesis 25:7

**“But do thou go thy way until the end; and thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”**

Daniel 12:13

I have in mind to say something about these two persons, Abraham and Daniel, as setting out the idea of interesting persons under the eye of God. They are both certainly very interesting persons and what has come out in the record in Scripture is to be instructive to us. The instruction is whether

we could think of ourselves as interesting under the eye of God.

Now, I do not think that any natural ability or human personality would make you interesting to God. No! What makes us interesting to Him is a matter of what He has done and of His work in us. The fact that God's call is not based on anything that we have done keeps us humble and we can be thankful for that. Why has God chosen any one of us? Can you answer that? No one can. We are chosen by God's sovereignty.

Abraham sets out the idea of God in His sovereignty. God called him out of Mesopotamia in the basin of the Euphrates and the Tigris, away yonder beyond the Middle East. God had His eye on Abraham and he was to become the father of the faithful. We also read about the steps of your father (Romans 4:12). 'Steps' indicate that the path of faith is to be known in some detail and not merely as a general idea.

It seems from Genesis chapter 11 verse 31, that although Abraham was called in Ur of the Chaldeans, it was Terah, his father who made the first move. There is no evidence of any work of God with Terah and that is sometimes the case in the ways of God. He uses various instruments or means to work out His purpose. Terah made the first move in a journey of about eight hundred miles up the river Euphrates from Ur to Haran at the top end of Palestine.

Then there comes a time when Abraham perceives what the call is about. I wonder if you have realised that God has called you and what that call is about. It is not to be a mysterious thing with us. If we knew more about the call of God we would be more definite in our lives. Abraham's call was, "to the land that I will shew thee". Fancy going all that way and not knowing where he was going. It is an evidence of faith, showing that God is to be trusted whatever the instrumentality is. So many times the believer gets caught up in circumstances, not knowing the way out, and yet he clings in faith to the God that is behind outward circumstances. Have you been able to explain everything in your life? I am sure you have not. Many a time when you do not know what is the meaning of things, it is a great comfort always to feel that for the believer the call of God is behind it.

So we read, "Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore

you; for I called him when he was alone, and blessed him, and multiplied him” (Isaiah 51:2). This blessing leads to the birth of Isaac and it speaks to us of the blessing of sonship. That is God’s thought. Galatians proves that: “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son...that we might receive sonship” (Galatians 4:4-5). What a marvellous thing that God had the whole great vista of blessing in view when He made His call to you.

The call of God comes to Abraham and he begins to move. If someone here gets the impression that they had been called and have not answered to it, I would appeal to you to get alone with God and understand what that call is. It is a call to great blessing. Two things particularly mark God’s blessing: first, Christ has been given for you and His blood shed on your account. God regards you highly. The second point is that He has given you the Spirit. You are a distinguished person; you have the Spirit of sonship. The very life of Christ is yours. There is no disparity between the essence of the life of that Man in the glory and the essence of the life that is in you. It is the same in character. What an interesting person you really are under the eye of God. And when you think of the glory of that calling of God you will not want to fritter away your life. You will want to use it according to the will of God, as Abraham sought to do.

God had His eye on Abraham — He called him. So when he makes the move from the north of Palestine down into the land his age is recorded as 75 (See Genesis 12:4). God knows the beginning of a move on your part as well as He knows that time when He called you. He is taking a note of when you answered to Him and may it be, please God, that somebody here tonight will answer to the call if never before. You will be a happier person and you will find yourself on the road that leads to glory. If God has called you, He will see you through and you will come to a time at the end, “full of days”. Every day, so to speak, providing something. No day will be colourless in the path of a person who has answered to the call of God.

Abraham’s age is mentioned five times, corresponding to five great steps of faith. At 75 he answered to the call of God, at 86 he was circumcised. When he was 99 the promise as to Isaac was made and he was 100 when Isaac was born. Finally it is recorded that he was 175 when he died. He

had no less than 100 years history with God. Say, do you not think that this man was an interesting person under the eye of God? Of course he was. And so are you. God thinks no end of you, fellow-believer. Pardon me putting it in that simple way. He has got such a great end in mind for you that things get altered in your life to that end. You may feel it strange at times that things do happen: well, God is behind it very often. He has your blessing in view. God marked the great moments in Abraham's life; what can He mark in your life? Abraham was a man of faith; he went through experiences that were a test of faith. Do not be frightened of those experiences. Sometimes they are pretty severe, you do not know what to do, but it is in the time of difficulty that you can prove your faith in God. And it never goes unanswered — believe me. Abraham finishes in a good old age full of days. God knows what He is doing with us. .

Well now as to Daniel. Let us have a look at him. There is going to be a great suffering for his nation, the Jews, but he looks right on to the end. Now, it is not faith so much, although it is there, with Daniel but what marks him is piety. Daniel had been taken away from his home surroundings. That is a test for anybody. Daniel was carried away captive and he had others with him. They were the best of the people of Israel; they were “of the royal seed and of the nobles” (Daniel 1:3). These were the kind of people that Nebuchadnezzar wanted to get hold of so that they would be conditioned to the ways of Babylon and become an asset to the great Babylonish kingdom. Satan wants Christians to to be conformed to the world of which he is the god and prince.

Nebuchadnezzar's decree is that they are to 'eat what I eat' and they are to 'drink of the wine I drink'. They are to be conditioned to the glory of that kingdom of Babylon. In this situation it is wonderful the humility that marks Daniel. He purposed in his heart that he would not do it. That was the purpose in his heart. Then what does he say? He “requests”. Notice the difference. Speaking to the steward, he requests that he might not be made to eat of the king's delicate food and it says that God showed him favour and mercy, favour in his soul and mercy in the actual circumstances that he is in. So as to justify his request he says, “Give us ten days” and you will see that we will be fairer and fatter than all the rest. Daniel is very definite;



he is not asking for about ten days, which, of course, he could alter at the end of the time if things were not working out. I like that about a christian. He or she is definite.

Well, at the end of the ten days Daniel and his companions are fairer and fatter than all the others. They had been fed on pulse and water as Daniel had requested. Pulse is the simplest form of food in the whole of the Scriptures and what could be simpler than water? Daniel is content with that. The pulse and the water represent the elements of piety in a believer's life. Believe me, the simpler you are about your life and all your planning the better you will be. I speak from some experience. All of us need help in this but particularly when we are younger. Paul only speaks about piety in his letters to Timothy and to Titus. They were younger men, and younger men and women need it more than the older ones.

You cannot teach old people much! They have been through life; they have seen the vanity of the world and they have proved God and know that He loves to bless repentant persons. As a result they have plumped for piety, letting God order their life instead of relying on their own ideas; but younger persons, like Timothy and Titus, need to be taught, helped and encouraged. Later in the book of Daniel we read of Nebuchadnezzar's amazing dream. He cannot make it out so he calls for the sorcerers. Often, in the past, as all sorcerers do, they had hoodwinked him with elaborate remarks and vague predictions and been well paid for it. This time the dream has had such an effect on Nebuchadnezzar that he challenges them to tell him both the dream and the interpretation. Of course they could not do it. In the end Daniel is called for. He prayed and he brought God into the matter. The believer is not limited to natural considerations. When you bring God in it is amazing how the light shines. Now, it is remarkable that Daniel and his three companions get together, wait upon God, and God reveals the secret of the dream. Daniel becomes the means in this way of describing what the times of the Gentiles are. From the failure of the Jewish nation rule has been given to the Gentile nations and that runs on to the end. It culminates in the man of sin that we read about in the book of the Revelation. It is all contained in the dream that Nebuchadnezzar had. What an interesting man Daniel was — he had the secret of God's ways. Believers today have the

secret of what the world's history really means.

Daniel gives both the dream and the interpretation to the king and Nebuchadnezzar is impressed. Daniel is given ever-greater honour. Is he upset by it? Oh, no. He goes on his simple way. In time the empire changes. It is no longer the Babylonian, it is Persian. Does he accommodate himself to that dynasty? No! He still goes on with God. We do not make any particular form of government our choice. We go on our way and await the One who comes to reign. He is still in rejection; the world has not changed, it is unrepentant to this day.

The time comes when Daniel is envied. It is a very painful thing to be envied. There were persons who envied Daniel and plotted to destroy him but Daniel has his faith in God. He was put in the lion's den but in a wonderful way the lions' mouths were shut. You feel sometimes in your history that persons who hated you could easily have engulfed you but God had His eye on you as He had with Daniel. What an interesting person he was in the eye of God! I would say to everyone here, 'Be of interest to God if He has begun a work in you He is going to finish it. Let Him have great joy in the interim period'.

So the end of this man Daniel is to go his way. You can be trusted, so to speak, to go your way. We are not here to dabble in the things of the world but to go on in faith and piety until the coming of the Lord. May it be so for His name's sake.

*Frank Woodford*

*An address at Marlow, 2 April 1977*

## **LEVITICUS.**

If God has a dwelling-place on earth He desires that we should enjoy His presence and suitably approach Him and offer Him sacrifice. This is what Leviticus unfolds. How rightly this book follows Exodus! Since God has delivered us and expressed His love to us in such a wonderful way by the

cross, our hearts would love to turn to Him in thanks and praise (See 1 Peter 2:5).

Many believers seem to think that God has left all matters relating to worship to be decided by men according to our taste and bent of mind. But the book of Leviticus clearly shews that this is not the case. Everything was settled by “The Lord commanded” or “The Lord spake ... saying.” And chapter 10 gives an instance of the seriousness of doing anything that the Lord does not command.

There are three thoughts that stand out prominently in Leviticus, namely: sacrifice, priesthood and purity or holiness. Leviticus has been called the priests’ handbook. In the present dispensation all believers are priests. We may rightly ask the question, however, ‘Are all believers priestly?’ Do we act as priests should act? It is a poor thing for me to contend that I am a priest if I lack priestly manners and sensibilities!

The material sacrifices of Leviticus have now given place to spiritual ones and believers may offer “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2).

The offerings or sacrifices were divided into two classes: those which were a “sweet savour,” such as burnt offerings, and those for sin. A burnt offering is a type of Christ’s offering Himself to God “for a sweet-smelling savour” (Ephesians 5:2). In the savour of this we are accepted. All was burnt on the altar (save the skin, which the offering priest had). The meat offering speaks of the life of Jesus, His pathway of devotion to the will of God. The peace offering tells us of the death of Christ as the ground of our fellowship; it is this offering which is referred to in 1 Corinthians 10. The sin offering had a remarkable character and there were several kinds of this offering. Generally speaking it brings before us Christ as the One who was “made sin for us”, and who bore “our sins in his own body on the tree”.

In the Book of Leviticus, however, the people were already redeemed and brought sacrifices to God with whom they were in relationship. This typifies our bringing to God the apprehension we have of Christ in these

various ways. Hence there were different kinds of offerings, such as a bullock, a lamb, or a pigeon, which set forth for us the different measure of our apprehension of Christ.

The priests had an important place in the law of Moses. In christianity this is no less the case, but with this great difference: under the law the priests were a separate class of people; in Christianity all believers are priests. The priests of old typify believers looked at in a special light. As priests we think of things and act in reference to God. We pray, praise and worship thus and present to God what we have learned of Christ.

It is essential in all our approach to God and in our dealings with His holy things to be marked by purity and holiness. Hence the suitable food for the people is given, the cleansing of leprosy dwelt upon and careful instructions laid down in relation to defilements of various kinds. A large part of Leviticus deals with this.

God values — and He would also tell His people how much He values — any devotedness on our part. The chapter on vows typifies this. Every upgoing of our hearts to God is valued and has a divine estimate. A vow is typical of devotedness.

Leviticus 23 gives us the feasts. It is very interesting to note that “convocations”, or callings together of saints, are feasts to Jehovah. Chapter 24 is of great moment. The early part of it shows how our place before God is dependent upon Christ’s priestly activity. All is maintained continually by Him. Although blasphemy, failure and violence may be found amongst God’s people on earth, what is really of Him is preserved continually in His eye through Christ.

*Malcolm Biggs*

*In the next issue, God willing, “Numbers”*