

75

Living Water

‘Living Water’ is published by the Stone Publishing Trust

(Registered Charity 1034689)

‘The Eagles’, Headcorn Road, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BU

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

Correspondents in the UK are welcome to use the Freepost address:–

Stone Publishing Trust,

FREEPOST TN3448,

Staplehurst,

TONBRIDGE, Kent, TN12 0BR

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

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

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

Editor: Mark Lemon

Cover Picture – Snowdonia

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

Living Water — Issue No. 75

May — June 2006

Recent Ministry		Page
SPIRITUAL VISION	David Bond	1
An address at Sydney, April 2005.		
THREE ROBES	Philip White	8
A preaching of the gospel at Yeovil, March 2004.		

Poetry Selection

A second selection of poems by E. H. Chater.

For most of his life E. H. Chater wrote poetry. The poems in this issue were written in the later years of his life

THE HEAVENLY MAN	14
GOD'S MIGHTY KING	14
THOU ART MINE, I AM THINE	15

Testimony Section

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER	Emily Gosse (1806-1857)	15
The final article in this series.		

A voice from the past

THE END – PART 1	E. J. McBride	18
The end of the days of Jesus on earth		

A word for today

“CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS”	Roger Pons	19
An Address at Sidcup, May 1994		

SPIRITUAL VISION

Luke	2: 22-38
Hebrews	2: 5-10
Revelation	4: 1-3

I have selected these scriptures because they speak of spiritual vision. It is a great thing to look beyond what is material. We are reminded elsewhere that the “things that are seen are for a time; the things that are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

The passage in Luke is of particular interest because it corresponds with the days in which we are. There are 450 years in which there is no recorded testimony from the Spirit of God in relation to what took place between the return of the remnant to Jerusalem and the prophet Malachi, and the incoming of Jesus as recorded here. It is quite evident that there must have been godly persons all through those centuries who carried the things of the Lord; the things of God were precious to them and they carried them through that time. So that when we come to Luke’s gospel persons are introduced who were faithful to the Lord. It is a great encouragement to us in our days of scattering that there were persons who were interested in divine things and to whom the Spirit could speak.

Simeon was an old man living in Jerusalem who had communications from the Spirit. He had been told that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord’s Christ – what an encouragement for this dear man. As he went on year after year, no doubt patiently waiting for this wonderful moment that the Spirit of God records in such detail here in these chapters, it must have meant much to his heart! It was not anything very significant, I suppose, to the casual eye to see two persons bringing their firstborn son to perform what was required according to the custom of the law. No doubt many had done it religiously before but this event was especially under the eye of heaven. That is a great thing for us to realise – that things are taken account of by heaven. Heaven takes notice! Heaven knew what were the desires of Simeon’s heart.

He came in the Spirit into the temple; he was ready to listen to what the Spirit of God would say to him. As Mary and Joseph came in with the

holy Babe, he was ready for the moment and he received Him into his arms and blessed God. What a moment! I wonder whether we can embrace what is of Christ in these days of smallness, embrace what is so precious in the eye of heaven? Heaven was aglow at that time. It speaks earlier in the chapter of myriads of angels praising God. This was the greatest event the world had ever known, the incoming of God's beloved Son – what a moment for heaven, what a moment for earth! We are told, “The holy thing that shall be born shall be called Son of God”. Simeon received Him into his arms; he was able to embrace what was so small and so insignificant to the natural eye.

Think of the perfection of that holy Babe! What a wonderful incoming was the coming of Jesus, a Babe that was born without sin; He knew no sin; no sin was attached to the birth of Jesus. It says of us that “in iniquity was I brought forth and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5). That is true of everyone of us but not so with Jesus. His birth was unique. Mary was but a vessel used by the Holy Spirit. She was blessed; indeed she was blessed amongst women – not above women. She was blessed to be the vessel through which God's beloved Son should come into this world.

I love to contemplate the circumstances that surround this moment. This man, Simeon, was full of Christ; he blessed God and said; ‘Now I can go’. He was ready to depart; he saw the solution of everything that had probably troubled him, things he had possibly prayed about for years. He saw the fulfilment of all in the holy Babe he held in his arms. I wonder whether we can embrace Christ like that? Is He precious to us? However small our impression of Christ may be, it is precious to heaven. Let our minds and hearts be open to receive this blessed Person. Simeon received Him in his arms but he had Him in his heart as well. He says let me go, “according to thy word... for mine eyes have seen thy salvation...” Nothing had been accomplished yet but there was no doubt or question in his mind that all would be fulfilled. He had seen God's salvation in that blessed Babe. The “salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation of the Gentiles...”

It has often been commented on that he was thinking not of Israel only but

of men everywhere. That is characteristic of Luke's gospel. Simeon says, "a light for revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel". Oh what a triumph. We need to be encouraged. We may feel most discouraged as we see the smallness and brokenness of things today. That was the situation here; Jesus was coming into a nation marked by unbelief. A remnant had returned hundreds of years before yet now largely they were in darkness as to God's operations in grace.

We have an elderly woman referred to here also. Sisters are not to feel left out. This was a priestly woman. She was far advanced in years and she did not depart from the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. What energy these persons had; they did not give up. How easy it is to give up. Many alas have done so. She did not give up, serving night and day in fastings and prayers, in devotion and testimony. She was priestly in relation to her service Godward and she was evangelical as well. She saw all was fulfilled because the Lord Jesus was there, although in infancy. "Coming up the same hour" she "gave praise top the Lord, and spoke of him to all those who waited for redemption in Jerusalem." It shows there were others who were waiting on God. We need to wait on God as to conditions. The Lord may call us all at any time to Himself but if He is prepared to leave us here we need to have this attitude of fasting and prayer in view of the maintenance and furtherance of God's testimony at the present time.

Let us be taken up with divine interests, things that are precious in the eye of heaven. That is what should mark us, an interest in divine things. Many alas have turned aside to what is merely material. How many beloved people of God have been overtaken with the spirit of the world. It is easy to succumb to it. I believe the Lord Jesus would stimulate our hearts today as to what is the main interest of heaven.

Now I refer to Hebrews. It is a beautiful picture. The writer says, "We see Jesus". We do not see everything subjected to Him; that is perfectly clear. We know He is absent. There would not be the conditions that surround us if the Lord was on earth. It speaks here of the habitable world which is to come; that is the world which should be before the believer. We are living in the light of that day, when the will of God will be done

on earth as it is in heaven. The question, then, is as to what is governing us at the present time. We do not see everything subjected to Him; we are in a scene of disorder, a scene of utter ruin. But in the midst of it, and while we do not yet see all things subjected to Him, we do see “Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death”. What a precious reminder of that lowly stoop of God’s beloved Son – “On account of the suffering of death”. He came into manhood in view of dying. We receive death; it is the penalty for sin but Jesus came that He might die to remove that penalty from us. “He tasted death for everything”.

The world to come has been put under His feet; it is a beautiful allusion to Psalm 8, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him”. Think of the supremacy of man; how degraded man is today through sin. Adam must have been a wonderful creature, God’s prime creation, but how sad to think of the decadence that marks humanity today. But all is recovered again in Christ. There is no decadence with Him! He is perfect in every feature. How perfect was the manhood of Jesus. He made Himself therefore an offering for sin, a perfect offering. In the offerings of the Old Testament the priest had to examine the animal that was brought to see that there was no blemish. They could not bring an animal that had a defect. It all speaks to us of the perfection of Jesus, who offered Himself without spot to God. That offering is the basis of our blessing, the basis too for blessing in the world to come.

When John the Baptist saw the Lord coming to him he said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”. That is what He is yet to do; He has not done it yet. He has done the work necessary and He will take away the sin of the world. Think of it all being cleansed, all the defilement, the corruption, the wickedness that abounds around us; the lower creation groans as well under the burden of sin but all will be removed by His mighty power. All things have been put under His feet and He is to be the universal Lord of all. We love to look forward to that day. As we come together tomorrow morning to remember Him, if the Lord leaves us here, that will be in our minds. We are showing forth His death until He come. He is to have His rights accorded to Him. A surge of

victory arises in the heart in anticipation of the Lord Jesus having what belongs to Him. He is the heir. Satan is the god of this world but he is a usurper, robbing God of His place in His creation. When the Lord Jesus comes He will recover everything for God, having reconciled all things through His death. “In him the fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to itself” (Colossians 1:19-20). What a moment! Reconciliation is the removal of distance that there might be complacency. It means God having His complacent rest in His creature. He has it in His own at the present time; He will have it in a day to come when Christ takes up His rights universally. What a day to look forward to. In the meantime we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.

I wonder whether that is our view? We can look up into heaven and see a blessed Man there. That is what Stephen saw. As those stones battered his body he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at His right hand. Think of what it meant for Stephen. His spirit was in accord with his Master; he says, “Lay not this sin to their charge”. How beautiful that was. There was a young man there, an absolute opponent of the gospel at that time. They laid their clothes at the feet of a young man called Saul. I think some goads were pricking his conscience at that time. When the Lord met him later He said, “It is hard for thee to kick against goads”. Saul had never seen a man suffer in such a way before, with the spirit that marked Stephen as he interceded for his enemies; “Lay not this sin to their charge”.

It is important therefore to have our eye fixed upon Christ. We shall never have satisfaction or true joy unless our eyes are looking on the blessed Man that is on the right hand of God. Let this be our portion at the present time. It goes on to say, “It became him ... by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory”. There was a divine purpose in what the Lord had come to do and that was to secure a response from the hearts of persons like us in relation to the praise of His God. I wonder whether we all have our full part in it as we come together on the Lord’s Day. The Lord’s Supper is so precious; it is the occasion where He calls forth our greatest affection that we might now have our part in praise to God.

We read that in bringing many sons to glory, God made perfect the leader of their salvation through suffering. The Lord Jesus is morally qualified

for the place He fills; He is personally qualified because of who He is; He is officially qualified because of the place that God has given Him. He is morally qualified because He is the one who has been obedient. What a wonderful vista of glory opens out to our view as we think of the perfection and blessedness of the Man who is the head and centre of God's universe of bliss. He made perfect the leader of their salvation through suffering. There is nothing that takes place here through which He has not passed, sin apart, in order that He might be a faithful and merciful high Priest in things relating to God.

Now finally, a word relating to Revelation. The chapter opens with John saying, "After these things I saw". He was a man that had a vision, a spiritual vision. He had seen things previous to this too. It says in chapter 2 that he became in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. On that occasion he heard a voice behind him. He turned to see the voice that spoke to him. What a solemn view he had of the Lord Jesus clothed as he had never seen Him before. He saw Him with a garment reaching to His feet, His eyes like flames of fire, girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. What a solemn sight!. It says, "When I saw him I fell at his feet as dead". John had known what it was to lean on the breast of Jesus; he had also known the place of divine affections, lying in His bosom. We need that; we need to be nourished by divine affections; we need the breast of Jesus to face a crisis. John leant on His breast. That was the time when He was to disclose the betrayer. Jesus said, "One of you will deliver me up". John, leaning on the breast of Jesus, said, "Lord, who is it?" (John 13:25). We need the strength and support of the breast of Jesus to sustain us in any time of crisis. It is available to us but the great thing is to rest on His bosom. It says of John that he lay in His bosom. What a place he had. Now he sees the same blessed Man in judicial garb. Why? Because of the departure of the church!

It is a very interesting and important study for every believer to read through the Lord's addresses to the seven assemblies in the Revelation. Each one has a voice to us. In each one you will find that the Lord has a word to the assembly in the place. It was addressed to seven companies in those seven places in Asia at that time. It says at the end of each, "He that

has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies”. It is a current matter. I think we would do well to view those things soberly in view of the present day. We are at the end of the dispensation, in the time of Laodicea. Think of the solemn state of that assembly; they boasted that they were rich yet the Lord says that they knew not that they were “the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” What a sad situation to be in, to think they had everything and yet the Lord was outside. The Lord says, “I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear my voice...I will come in unto him”. He did not go into that assembly; He was outside! It does not say ‘If any one hear my knock’, but “if any one hear my voice”. What a word it was. Yet He has a counsel for them. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white garments, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest.” The resources are all in Christ. They are still there to be drawn upon, if only we will submit to the pleadings of love.

Now, where we read in chapter 4, all that is past. John is to see the things that are about to be. We are on the threshold of these activities taking place from the throne. I think you will find in this book that there are over thirty references to John saying, “I saw.” Here is one of them. What did he see? “A throne stood in the heaven”. He heard a voice saying, “Come up here”. I wonder whether you would like a visit to heaven? What a wonderful invitation. John was in Patmos, isolated as far as we know, with nobody nearby, but he had an invitation to go up to heaven. “Come up here.” He was ready to go, ready to go and hear what was going to take place in heaven! Before anything proceeds he sees this throne; it stood in the heaven. “Immediately”, it says, “I became in the Spirit”.

You notice how the Spirit of God shows in all these passages the need on our part to be available increasingly to the Spirit. It is He alone that can give us power in relation to divine things. Let us see that we give place to the Spirit of God, a divine Person here in testimony. His one purpose is that He might glorify our Lord Jesus Christ. He would say to us all tonight, “that is my Master”.

The throne described here is of absolute purity. It stood in the heaven,

absolutely secure and stable; it is not like the changing governments of this scene. Everything proceeds from this position in view of the resolving of good and evil finally on the earth, until the time recorded in the 19th chapter when Babylon has been finally overthrown, judged and destroyed and the church in all its beauty rises to its glory. J. N. Darby said many years ago that Babylon will go from her glory to her ruin and the church will go from her ruin to her glory. What a wonderful vision to have! Every blood bought saint indwelt by the Spirit will have part in that city, which is the bride of Christ and in which God's glory is to be displayed in the coming day.

Let us be then persons of vision today. Let our spirits, minds and hearts be engaged in that which is immediately ahead. We do not know when but let us be ready, ready for the home call, when we shall be finally with Christ and be with Him forever. May the Lord help us and encourage us by these things for His Name's sake.

David Bond

An address at Sydney, 23rd April 2005.

THREE ROBES

Introduction

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sowed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons” (Genesis 3:7)

The moment that man disobeyed God and fell into sin he was exposed. It says in the Scriptures, “All things are naked and laid bare to his eyes, with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13). You might say that you do not believe in God, but there is a God, One who created everything. He created you and you have to answer to your Creator. We are made in His image and we are responsible to Him and everything is laid bare to Him. King David found that out. Wherever he went God could see him. If he went down to the depth of the oceans, God was there. Even in the darkness

of the night he could not be hidden. What a terrible thing that is, that everything is laid bare before Him with whom we have to do. Judgment is coming, but I am not here to preach judgment, but the way of escape from judgment. We cannot escape divine judgment apart from God's great way of salvation.

I read in Genesis because this is where our sinful history began. Genesis is the book of beginnings. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. After that we have become sinners, generation after generation right down to you and me. Adam and Eve realised that they were sinners. Who told them that they were naked? Who told them that they were unsuited for God's presence? They were created in innocence but as a result of their disobedience the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. There is something inside us that tells us what is right and what is wrong – it is called a conscience. If you do not listen to God and keep rejecting the gospel then your conscience becomes hardened. Thank God, He can even work with a hardened conscience. Nothing can stop the power of the grace of God breaking down the heart.

Adam and Eve's consciences were not hardened; they knew at once that they had done wrong and that they were naked and they tried to do something about it. Yet they did the wrong thing. They "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons"; and when they heard the voice of God they hid themselves. You will never get blessing that way. The only salvation that will be effective is that which God freely gives. The question of our sins is only met through the free grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet when a person realises that they are a sinner that is a good step, but the next step is important too. In the parable in Luke's gospel the man said "O God, have compassion on me, the sinner" (Luke 18:13). That cry will always be answered. That man felt as if he was the only one that had ever sinned. That is the way of salvation, to recognise our wrongdoing and to seek forgiveness from God. God met the condition of Adam and Eve by making them coats of skin. It looks on to the death of Another – the death of Jesus.

All the other scriptures I read speak of robes; there is a robe of pretence, the robe of favour and the robe of righteousness.

A robe of pretence

“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk about in long robes, and who love salutations in the market places, and the first seat in the synagogues...” (Luke 20:46)

Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves through their own efforts. When we come to the New Testament we find these religious people who liked to walk about in long robes. It is the robe of pretence. They thought they were very wonderful. In those days the longer your robe was the more important you claimed to be. These scribes had no sense of sin or of their shortcomings. I wonder if you are relying on your self-respect or your place in the local community. We have neighbours who consider themselves to be christians. They are full of good works and morally upright but they have no sense of their need of a Saviour. How many today are trying to cover up our sinful nature by our self-respect. The Lord says, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk about in long robes”.

Religion will not save you or deal with your sins – you need to come to the Lord Jesus Christ and have to do with Him. You might have a very important place in a church and be well respected where you live but, as Jesus said of these people, inside they were like a rotten sepulchre. White, maybe on the outside, but inside filthy, full of dead men’s bones. They were just a show. Is your life just a show?

That is what a true hypocrite is – someone who pretends to be something that they are not. I am a Christian and I hope that you are, but what does it mean? It is not just an outward thing. It means having a life-changing experience by admitting that you are a sinner and trusting in the Saviour.

The robe of favour

“And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no longer worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his bondmen, Bring out the best robe and clothe him in it....” (Luke 15:21-22).

In Luke 15 we have the parable of the prodigal son. He went away into a far country; that is like you and me in our sins – we are far from God. Eventually he found himself in want; his clothes were rags and he wanted

to feed himself with the pig's food. What a terrible position he had got into. That is just like you and me in our sins. We are no different from that picture. Away from God with un-judged sins, what poverty we are in!

Then everything changes in one verse. It says, "he came to himself". That is what repentance really is. You tell God that He is right and that you are wrong. He turned round. We need to turn from the course that we are on that is leading to destruction. Have you turned? God is speaking to you tonight that you might turn round. That is what conversion is. Come back to the Father, come back to God, and the wonderful thing is that even before you get home God is there to meet you. What a God we have to do with.

We read of the prodigal that, "he rose up and went to his own father". Yet while he was yet a long way off the father ran to him and covered him with kisses. I love that! The prodigal son had gone into a country a long way off, and when he repented, it was when he was a long way off that the father saw him and ran to meet him. It was not when he was nearly home. It is a wonderful picture of the gospel. When you and I in our sins realise what utter misery and folly we are in and we cry to God, He hears our cry and He meets us in His grace and mercy and showers His love upon us.

The prodigal says, "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am no longer worthy to be called thy son". He was going to add, "make me as one of thy hired servants", the father, as it were, cuts him short. The father says, "Bring out the best robe". That is the robe of honour. How different from the robes of the scribes. There is no pretence here – this is the real thing. This is the robe that was kept for the favoured son. What a transformation.

God has sent His only beloved Son to suffer and die that you and I might be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Think of Jesus: He was perfect and holy. God opened the heavens and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight" (Matthew 3:17). If you put your trust in Jesus, God sees the same perfection in you as He sees in Jesus. He does not see your sins; they are put away. As believers we are clothed in Christ. It is the best robe! God has given His very best. He gave His only-begotten Son. What more could He give?

God loved us so much, even though we were sinners. Paul says, “God commends his love to us, in that, we being still sinners, Christ has died for us” (Romans 5:8). Is that not wonderful? While we were unlovable, God sent Jesus to die for us. When we believe in Christ, God clothes us in all the worth of His Son.

Have you come back to God? This robe is available for every one who comes to Him, and it fits! It does not matter if you are a big sinner or a little sinner. Actually we are all on the same footing before God. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, but the robe fits all that trust in Christ. There is nobody that need be excluded. God is able to clothe you with the wonderful righteousness of Christ. I wonder if you have come to Jesus and had a transaction with Him?

The robe of righteousness

“I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with the priestly turban, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isaiah 61:10).

What Isaiah writes here is almost what we call a doxology. That is a long word, but it really just means the heart giving thanks to God for what He is and what He has done. As we come to Jesus and accept Him as our Saviour we are led to give praise and thanks to God. “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”. That is what God will do for everyone who comes to Him in repentance. He has clothed me with a garment of salvation. Are you saved?

To be saved means that our sins have gone. In the eye of God there is nothing outstanding against us. Apart from the work of Christ we have no hope. As a sinner who has to do with God, I have no defence; I am guilty as charged but God in His grace has met the whole charge.

The precious blood of Jesus, without which there is no redemption, has met the debt. Jesus’ precious blood cleanses us from all sin and we are saved from judgment to come. There is judgment coming. God is not acting in judgment today; it is a time of grace, but He will act in judgment.

Today He is inviting you to come by way of faith and repentance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

As trusting in Christ we are saved from our sins, we are saved from judgment to come and we are also to be saved from this present evil world. This world is going to have judgment executed on it. Everything that is against God is going to be dealt with. People sometimes ask why God allows certain evil things. I will tell you. It is not the time of judgment; in His grace He waits so that you might come into salvation.

The passage that we read in Isaiah continues: “as a bridegroom decketh himself with the priestly turban, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels”. A marriage is a wonderful thing; most people love to go to a wedding. Everyone who has been saved by Jesus forms part of the church. The church is going to shine throughout the ages of eternity and will reflect the glory of Jesus. He will be the object of the praise of the church forever.

If you have put your trust in Jesus and have repented of your sin, then you are clothed in this robe of righteousness and you form part of the church – God’s assembly. Jesus is coming to claim the church as His bride for Himself. It could happen at any moment, that the bride – every single one who has trusted in Jesus, and has been clothed in His worth – will be called home to be with the Lord Jesus forever. Will you be there? You can be! If you will put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ you can be absolutely certain of being there.

“I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah”. As we listen to the Gospel and as we respond to the invitation to trust in Jesus, our hearts should be welling up with praise and thanksgiving and be full of joy. No one in this world can rejoice like the Christian because we have this great salvation. “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”. May we all be clothed with this garment, and have joy and peace in believing.

Philip White

Gospel preaching at Yeovil, 28th March 2004.

THE HEAVENLY MAN

In the brightest spot in glory,
See Him, God's beloved Son,
Christ, the Man of His blest counsel,
Crowned and seated on His throne.

All the heavenly hosts adore Him,
And the glory of His name
Fills the wide expanse of heaven –
His is everlasting fame.

Christ, the Lamb, the Man of
sorrows,
Made God's will His whole delight,
Bore the cross, the shame despising,
Fought and won the faithful fight.

Now above He waits in patience,
And when we His face behold,
He will to our hearts enraptured
His heart's deepest love unfold.

It's His love that daily weaneth
From this ruined scene below;
It's His love that daily cheereth
Mid earth's sorrows, grief and woe.

Soon the bright-unclouded morning
On His favoured saints shall dawn,
And the dreary night of mourning
Be for ever past and gone.

E. H. Chater (1892)

GOD'S MIGHTY KING

Mighty King, with glory crowned,
Theme of everlasting praise,
Thy return anticipating,
Joyous songs Thy saints now raise.

“Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy”
Gladly, we Thee Lord, acclaim;
Joyfully, with hearts adoring,
Magnify Thy holy name.

Thy right hand shall wield the sceptre,
Thy blest brow shall wear the crown,
Thou shalt sit in state enthroned,
All the world Thy rights shall own.

Jesus, Lord, the mighty Saviour,
Thou art Ruler over all,
In Thy kingdom every creature
Joyfully on Thee shall call.

Every knee shall bow before thee
Every tongue confess Thy name.
Every saint with joy adore Thee,
Celebrate Thy worth and fame.

King of kings, all kings shall own
Thee

Sovereign, universal Lord,
All the nations then shall serve
Thee,
Governed by Thy living word.

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour,
Jesus, lowly sufferer here,
We would now by our behaviour
Tell to all that Thou art near.

E. H. Chater (1910)

THOU ART MINE, I AM THINE

Glory be to Thee, O Lord,
Blessed Son of God,
Ever be Thy name adored,
Thou who earth hast trod;
Here to do God's holy will
Perfect was Thy way;
Thou the troubled heart dost still
All its fear allay.
Thou art mine, I am Thine.

Yea all glory be to Thee
Saviour crucified,
Thou who once on Calvary
Gavest Thyself and died;
All was finished there for me,
Thou has been made sin,
God-forsaken on the tree,
My lost soul to win.
Thou art mine, I am Thine.

Thou art risen from the grave,
Burst is every band.
Thou art mighty now to save,
Crowned at God's right hand.
Outstretched are Thine arms of love,
Fond is Thy embrace,
Soon Thou'lt welcome me above,
To behold Thy face.
Thou art mine, I am Thine.

Thine the sorrow, Thine the pain,
Spotless Lamb of God,
Mine the everlasting gain
Through Thy precious blood;
Thou didst win my wayward heart
By Thy love to me,
Now I have eternal part,
Blessed Lord with Thee.
Thou art mine, I am Thine.

E. H. Chater (1913)

THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

It is a very difficult thing for a soldier to be a Christian, but it is not impossible. The late war* has produced many glorious examples of true religion, both in soldiers and their officers, and the New Testament gives some striking examples of the power of faith in Jesus over the hearts of soldiers in olden times.

The first mentioned was an officer who entreated Jesus to cure his servant who was paralysed. This officer had such full confidence in the power of the Lord Jesus that he did not even wish Him to come and see his servant,

*The Crimean War (1854-56)

but believed that Jesus was able to cure him at a distance by speaking a word.

Have you such a faith as this? Do you believe that Jesus Christ, though in heaven, is able to heal your soul. Have you applied to Him to cure your soul as the centurion did appeal for his servant? Have you said to Jesus, ‘Lord, I am grievously tormented by sin: I cannot do anything to save myself, I am altogether under the power of Satan: but I know if Thou speak but the word, my soul shall be healed?’ If you ask this, truly desiring it as the centurion desired the cure of his servant; if you believe that Jesus is able to save all who come to him; if you believe the truth of His word, “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out”, you will as certainly get salvation for your soul, as this Roman soldier got a cure for his servant.

I wish you would read the story in Matthew’s gospel chapter 8; you will see there that the Lord Jesus not only granted the prayer of the soldier immediately, but He was greatly pleased with him for believing at once, and not requiring to see before he would believe. May God give you grace thus to believe.

But perhaps you do not feel the burden of sin. Perhaps you say, ‘I have always been a moral and even a religious man; I pray to God, I do what good I can to others, and I expect God will have mercy on me when I die’.

It is a good thing, as far as it goes, to lead a moral life and, in the Acts of the Apostles chapter 10, we read of a soldier who was as religious a man as you are, perhaps more so; he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; he gave away much alms, and prayed to God always. Can you say as much of yourself? If so, hear what God said to Cornelius. An angel appeared to him and commanded him to send to Joppa for a man called Simon Peter, who should tell him how he and his house should be saved.

You see by this that all Cornelius’ good deeds were not enough to save him, and your good deeds will not be enough to save you.

Cornelius was quite sincere in his desire to know the way of salvation; therefore he sent immediately to Joppa, and when Peter came to him he

listened to his words and obeyed them.

Do you wish to know what it was Peter told Cornelius to do in order to be saved? And are you as willing to do God's will, if you knew it?

What God required of Cornelius, and what He requires of you, is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with the whole heart. If Cornelius had refused to believe in Jesus Christ, and to receive Him for his Lord and Master, his prayers, his alms and all his religion, would not have saved him. But he did believe directly he heard of Him, and the consequence was, that his soul was saved and he received the Holy Ghost.

Now if you reject Jesus Christ, you will certainly be lost, however good and moral your outward conduct may be, but if you are like Cornelius, if you receive Him into your heart you will become a child of God (John 1:12). You will also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He will come and dwell in your heart, and teach you to walk in God's ways, and when this life is ended, you will assuredly go to dwell with God forever in heaven.

A believer is often in Scripture compared to a soldier, and when a person is converted we may say that they are enlisted in the service of the King of kings. Up till then they had been in rebellion against God; now they have to fight for God. The enemies are Satan, the world and sin, enemies that never cease to assail as long as we live and we must never cease to watch against them. The apostle Paul tells us how we are to be armed against these enemies (see Ephesians 6:10-18). Our girdle is truth, our breastplate righteousness; our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Our shield is to be faith, which none of the darts of the devil shall be able to pierce. Our helmet is the hope of salvation. Our sword is the word of God. Our great Captain is the Lord Jesus. He has fought and won the battle before us, and by fighting under His banner, victory is certain. The true believer is one with Jesus, and God will put all enemies under His feet.

Satan now seems to rule this earth, and the men of this world are his willing slaves; but the hour is coming when Jesus shall take to Himself the power that the Father has given Him. Then He will go forth conquering and to conquer, and the armies of His people will follow Him arrayed in righteousness, which they have gained by being washed in the blood of Jesus.

British soldiers, and all who read these pages, let me beseech you at once to come to Jesus: so shall you be happy on earth, saved from the judgment, and blessed through the endless ages of eternity.

Emily Gosse

Reproduced with permission from the British Library.

THE END (1)

(The end of the days of Jesus on earth)

Luke 23:39-43

I want to speak of the end of the days of Jesus on earth, not the days of Jesus after His resurrection, because the appearing of the Lord in resurrection were only to His own, but the last days of Jesus on earth. He died as a malefactor but as Paul says to Timothy “He was justified in the Spirit” (1 Timothy 3:16). Remember not to expect any justification from the scene where Christ died. You will get justification in the Spirit. You will have the pleasure, if you are a true believer in the Lord, of coming back again in a body of glory, a definite vindication of your whole Christian pathway. As the Lord puts it so beautifully “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43).

Now, what was the end of the days of this blessed Person? He was born in Bethlehem and laid in a manger, unknown and unwanted. He was put in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn. He trod His path through various circumstances, mainly suffering circumstances, because, being the perfect Man He was, things that would not have tried you or me at all were intensely painful to His spirit. He must have been constantly suffering in His spirit, even amongst those dearest to Him.

You can understand what it was to His spirit to know that the twelve He had selected and favoured with such extraordinary ability to heal the sick and cure the lame, to open the eyes of the blind, were debating who should be the greatest. Think of what that meant to the spirit of Jesus, but He went through it.

Now we have the close of His life here as men knew it, and what is it

like? Well, at the beginning He was alone in the manger, at the end He is in the paradise of God. Not the paradise of Eden – it would have been wonderful if He had brought that back again – but the paradise of God. It was an end that is worthy of such a life. He had not only solved the problem that had come in by way of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but He had opened the door into the blessed sphere wherein was the tree of life, and I can understand what an intense delight it was to His heart to go the first day into that sphere with company.

You may say, ‘Who went with Him?’ The thief went with Him! I believe that is a characteristic picture of the whole company of the redeemed throughout the whole christian period.

E. J McBride (1931)

In the next issue, God willing, “The end of a servant’s course”

CHILDREN KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS

“...how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to await his Son from the heavens, whom he raised from among the dead, Jesus our deliverer from the coming wrath”

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

Thessalonica was an adulterous city but the gospel of God came there and some trusted in Christ. God had prepared hearts to receive the word and they turned from idols to serve the living and true God. My purpose in reading this verse is to raise the question with each one of us as to whether we have continued to turn away from idolatry. There was only one Man who was not an idolater, and that was Jesus. He loved the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, understanding and strength. Nothing ever came between Him and His God. How different from you and me.

The blood of a lamb redeemed the children of Israel in Egypt. We have been redeemed by the blood of God’s Lamb – the holy Lamb of God. He laid down His life as the perfect offering and God has accepted that offering of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no need for any other sacrifice; God is fully satisfied with what Christ has done and the witness of that is that God has raised Jesus from among the dead.

The people of Israel passed through the Red Sea; and we have passed through the Red sea:– the death of Christ lies between us and the world. There is no going back. Like the children of Israel in the wilderness we may want to go back to the world – to go back to Egypt – but we can never fully go back there. The death of Christ stands between us and the world. God has called us to a pilgrim pathway in a world that is a wilderness in the eye of God because it has crucified His Son. The cry went out, “we will not that this man should reign over us” (Luke 19:14). There is no place for Christ in this world – in its counsels, its governments, its commerce or in its pleasures. He is still the rejected One.

Is this world a wilderness to you? Or have you found a place in it? Have you settled down in this world that has rejected Christ. When you witness for Christ in this world what does it bring to light? It brings out the hatred that is in the world for my Lord and Saviour. The clearer our testimony is to our living Lord, the more we will learn that this world still does not want Christ.

The children of Israel in the wilderness were naturally in an impossible situation. There was very little food or water but God gave them food; there was the manna. God will provide everything that we need for help and guidance in the spiritual wilderness that is the world. We are called to be dependent upon Him. The manna was food for the Israelites in the wilderness, then the smitten rock provided refreshment. My Saviour was smitten so that each one of us who believes might not only be cleansed from our sins but receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He becomes in the believer a fountain of water springing up into eternal life. What refreshment and sustenance He gives to our souls as He maintains us in this world where there is nothing truly to sustain or refresh us. God would have us to find our resource in the divine Person – the Holy Spirit – who has taken up His abode in us.

As the children of Israel continued their wilderness journey, seventy of the elders knew what it was to go up into the mountain and sit down and eat in the presence of God. Then when Moses went up to the top of the mountain, what happened? The Israelites turned to idolatry. The fact that Moses was out of sight caused them to turn to idolatry. They made a golden calf and worshipped it. They put a religious veneer on it and called

it a feast to the Lord but it was nothing of the kind.

We are tested during this time when our Lord Jesus Christ is absent. He has ascended up on high and in the time of waiting for His return we are tested as to whether we are going to be found here faithful and true to Him, or whether we are going to be turned aside and the elements of idolatry enter into our hearts.

If you go to the beginning of Revelation we read seven messages from the Lord to seven churches. The first church that is addressed is in Ephesus and the departure that is drawn attention to there is, “thou hast left thy first love”. That does not mean that the believers in Ephesus did not love Christ – but that He had second place in their affections, instead of the first place. That is the spirit of idolatry working in the heart. Christ may get displaced in our hearts and something else gets the first place. We see what happens if that line of things is allowed to continue in the awful state of the church at Laodicea. There, Christ is totally displaced. He is outside. He stands at the door and knocks. Let each of us search our hearts honestly before God and see whether Christ has the first place there.

Jesus fills the heart of God; God’s joy and delight is in that glorious blessed Man who fills God’s heart and His presence. If He fills God’s heart, surely He is worthy to fill our hearts! Let us cry to the Holy Spirit tonight that He might magnify Christ in our hearts, that we might see the glory of the living Lord and that we might grow in our appreciation of that blessed One.

We read in the book of Judges that “every man did what was right in his own eyes” That is a definition of idolatry. It means that I think that I am right in what I hold and say, I am going to ride roughshod over everybody else, I am going to do what I please and take little notice of anyone else. I am worshipping the great idol “Me”.

The true heart of a believer is marked by wanting to do what Christ wants us to do, that we may be found here pleasing to Him. Yet we are all conscious how weak we are, firstly in discerning what is truly pleasing to Him and then in answering to that discernment. Again the Spirit is the answer. He delights to give us understanding and the strength and faith to answer to the will of the Lord.

We have each been bought by the precious blood of Christ. Our Lord suffered on Calvary's cross. He suffered from the hands of man, but more than that, as made sin He suffered at the hand of a holy sin-hating God. What did it mean to His holy soul to be forsaken of God? We can never tell. Jesus bore the judgement that was rightly due to you and me as sinners. He bore the penalty so that He might bring us back to God. Is He not worthy to fill our hearts and souls and our whole being? Is He not worthy to be the object of everything that you and I do and say? How the Spirit of God would magnify the One who has loved us above all others. How great is the love of Jesus. Who can measure it? Thank God that we know something of it. Let us turn away from other things and see the glory of God's Man. Let us seek the Spirit's help that our eyes might be fixed upon Jesus and that we might have no other object before our souls.

There is a comment in the book of Judges that reads, "...all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh" (Judges 18:31). If an Israelite was convicted of his idolatry, God was within his reach. He only had to go to Shiloh in repentance, take his sin offering, and he would know the blessing of God. Tonight, whatever our histories, however far we have departed from Christ in our hearts, He has not moved. The Lord Jesus Christ is available to each one of us. It only requires that in repentance we should judge the idolatry in our hearts and seek after the Lord. The Spirit of God would give us the power to do so.

Now we are to be found in these last days, waiting for God's Son from heaven. Is the expectancy of the Lord's return a burning reality in our hearts? I thank God that there is a deepened longing in my soul for the Lord to return to take us to be with Himself. I trust that is also reflected in the souls of many in this room. Has the Morning Star risen in your heart?

What a moment it will be when the Lord Jesus Christ descends with trump of God and archangel's voice and the dead in Christ will rise first and then we, the living, who remain to the coming of the Lord, will be caught up together with them to be with the Lord for ever. What a wonderful moment when we shall see the One whom we have loved face to face. We apprehend Him but dimly now, but then we shall see Him as He is. It is the One who has died for us that will come personally to fetch us. The cry would go forth afresh, "Behold the Bridegroom". Have we each heard it

and answered to that call or are we enmeshed in the things of the world? It is easy to drift on in the things of the world but the Spirit of God would cause an awakening in our souls tonight. The Lord is coming to take us to be with Himself, out of this world of sorrow, sin and failure. Everyone who has put his or her trust in Him will be with Him, from Abel right down the centuries of time. There will be myriads, everyone redeemed by His precious blood, all caught up to be with Him forever. What a triumph it will be. May the hope of it fill our hearts afresh.

What would be the effect of that? Firstly, it would make us evangelical in outlook. Our hearts would be moved as we can see so many people around us do not know our Lord Jesus Christ. They will be left here when the Lord comes and they will have lost the opportunity of coming to know Him. There will be no second opportunity for those who have heard the gospel. We have a responsibility to such persons, a responsibility to tell them of the Saviour. You may say, 'I am not a preacher, I have not got the gift of the evangelist', but that is not quite the point. I wish there were more with the gift of the evangelist. I pray that God might be pleased to raise up more evangelists in these last days. But we can all tell others about the Saviour. Tell them of the glorious One who has saved us and brought us to God. May there be a deep desire in our souls that people should come to know the Lord and be blessed, that people should be delivered from the power of Satan, sin and death. Each of us can render a simple testimony as to what the Lord has done for us. The Lord does not ask any one of us to do anything beyond the strength that He has given to us, but we have a responsibility to tell others about Jesus.

Another effect of the living hope of the Lord's return is that we would become good stewards of what He has given us. First of all, my body, soul and spirit belong to the Lord. They do not belong to me. He has purchased me with His own precious blood. I belong to Him. My body is not mine to do what I want with and go where I want to go. My mouth is not my property; it is to come under the control of the Lord Jesus. I belong to Christ and my whole being is to be used for the furtherance of what is for His pleasure.

We sometimes sing:

‘O, what a debt we owe
To Him who shed His blood...’

The Lord never calls in that debt but we have a moral responsibility; a sense of indebtedness to our Saviour should be in our hearts and underlie our committal to Him. We are left here to be an expression of Himself and His will and heart.

Another thing in stewardship is that the Lord has committed certain material things into our hands. They are not just for our own comfort, but have been given to us so that we might be able to serve Him. It is well before we do anything to commit it to the Lord as to whether it is going to further what is for Him. If that is not going to be the outcome, it is best to leave it.

Then we have been given time and we need to be stewards of our time so that it is used for the benefit of our Lord and Master. How perfectly He used His time. Every moment of His day was profitable to His God and Father. Let us feed upon the committal we see in Him, so that we might be formed by the Spirit of God in the same character of committal that shone in all its glorious perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ. He could say at a time of most terrible pressure, “Not my will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). Does that spirit echo in our hearts? Oh, that we might have the will of the Lord more before us and seek to do what pleases Him in the little time that is left. What a testimony there would be!

Believers were first called christians at Antioch. People recognised what was of Christ in them and they put a name to it. Would it not be a fine thing if those people that you and I have to do with every day could put a name across us because they could see something of Christ in us? Could see something of the Master shining in the spirit that we show, the way we speak and the fact that we do things in a manner so different from the way that the world does them? They are to see a different man shining in us, the Man Christ Jesus, in the Holy Spirit’s power.

We are all tested and humbled as to these things. I find how far I fall short of the divine objective. Yet the very humbling is in view of our blessing.

We realise that we have no strength in ourselves to answer to the will of God and this casts us upon the Spirit of God in whom we have everything that is needed.

When we read those seven messages to the churches, referred to earlier, we find that in each one something very specific is said to the “overcomer”. Would not everyone here want to be an overcomer? Difficulties can rise up like great mountains sometimes and the very difficulty becomes the object of our hearts and souls, instead of Christ. The difficulty becomes an idol! If we get our eyes on the Lord, then those difficulties get into their right proportion and the Spirit of God comes in and helps us through them.

What a God we have! What a Saviour we have! We can thank the blessed Spirit, too, that He has stooped to dwell in each one of us to sustain us in the difficulties of the way so that we might shine as bright lights for the Lord in these dark days.

May the reality of the Lord’s coming be burning brightly in our hearts. Let us turn away from that which is worthless and commit ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1), says the Spirit of God. May we be found here in dependence on God until the time when the Lord comes to take us to be with Himself. Let us be ready and waiting, committed to Him.

One mark of that committal is in our love for one another. If we truly love the Lord, we will also love those that belong to Him. That is the exhortation in John’s first epistle. The call is very wide. Wherever God has worked in a soul let us seek to link on with that work.

Now in closing, I just want to quote from John’s first epistle. They may actually be the last words of Scripture written: “Children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

Roger Pons

An address at Sidcup, 14th May 1994