



# *Living Water*

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# THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST

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## **Introduction**

My desire, with the help of the Spirit of God, is to speak about the first verse that we read and what develops from it: “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”. Where it stands it appears to be somewhat on its own, a simple statement, we might say, of christian doctrine. I would say immediately that doctrine is important: on its own it will not bring us very far into the things of God, but we all need an outline of sound words so that we know what we believe and why we believe it, and are prepared to act upon it. The other Scriptures that we have read I believe show that the verse in John 3 actually has some very practical consequences which we all do well to pay attention to.

The statement is a most remarkable one. The Father is the One whom the Lord Jesus came to reveal and as a result, through grace, we have come to know God as Father: “my Father and your Father, ... my God and your God” (John 20:17). Here we have this statement of Scripture that the Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand. I think the final Scripture that we read in Hebrews shows that there is nothing left out from that.

There is a further verse at the end of the chapter as to the blessing of believing on the Son, which brings us life eternal, and the danger of not being subject to the Son. We might go on to say that in chapter 4 we see a very good illustration of what it meant for the Father to love the Son and to give all things to be in His hand. Among the “all things” was the woman of Samaria who came to Christ.

## **Judgment and life given into the hands of the Son**

I went on to chapter 5 because there are two things spoken of quite specifically there. One is judgment and the other is life; the Lord Himself says that the Father has given both of these into His hand. Where we

began to read the Lord is speaking about life and death and quickening; “the Father raises the dead and quickens them”. God had already acted in the Old Testament by giving life to some, but He says, “thus the Son also quickens whom he will”. That is, it is committed to the Lord to have that right to act. It says of the Lord that He is a life giving Spirit, one who gives life (1 Corinthians 15:45). Then immediately it says, “neither does the Father judge any one, but has given all judgment to the Son; that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father”.

When Paul came to Athens it was something that he included in his preaching, that God was going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man, he says, that God has ordained, giving witness of it in that He has raised Him from among the dead (Acts 17:31). So the testimony of the Lord through John’s gospel and Paul’s testimony is the same — judgment is committed to the Son.

I think that God has given that commission to the Lord Jesus Christ as One who is entitled to exercise it, because if He has been raised from the dead it is only because He once entered into death. No one has to face the Lord as judge who has not had the opportunity to face Him as Saviour. As, indeed, the Lord says here, “he that hears my word, and believes him that has sent me, has life eternal, and does not come into judgment, but is passed out of death into life”, showing that the context of judgment here is for examining what man has been here on the earth and, apart from Christ and His redeeming work, it is going to lead to condemnation. But the One into whose hand judgment is committed is the One who bore the judgment of God against sin and is available to all, currently, as Redeemer and as Lord.

We read, “ ... hears my word, and believes him that has sent me”. In that verse the Lord says nothing directly about the need of forgiveness or the work of atonement but the clue to it is there in hearing His word. We are to hear all that the Lord Jesus says and to act upon it and His word would surely include the need of the forgiveness of our sins and repentance before God. I just say that in passing that we might see the context in which the Lord is speaking. He is speaking about judgment, He had to speak of it in the presence of those who were opposed to Him, but He did not speak of judgment alone; He also spoke of the way of salvation as to

how judgment could be escaped altogether.

In passing, again, I just add that there is this judgment according to what we have done which for unbelievers is inevitably going to lead to condemnation. There is also the passage of Scripture which speaks of us (believers) being manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). We are not to forget that, either. It will not be for condemnation, that is clear. Yet it should raise concern with us about being pleasing to the Lord while we are here in this world. We do not want to appear before Him and find that there is much in which He has found no pleasure. Indeed, it is a happy thing if a believer desires to please the Lord now. We may not always find it very easy. We may not feel that we understand the Lord's mind for us very well. It is a great thing to desire to do His will. "If any one desire" the Lord says "to practise his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is of God, or that I speak from myself" (John 7:17). It is a verse that has often weighed with me, down the years, as to whether I have any light as to the mind of God.

Now the Lord has something else to say, "even as the Father has life in himself, so he has given to the Son also to have life in himself". That, too, is a very remarkable statement of Scripture because it says of the Lord in the beginning of John's gospel, "in him was life". That is, as being God in Himself, life was in Him. But here, the Lord speaks as Man, the One to whom the Father has given also to have life in Himself, and "has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is Son of man".

One of the great features of Scripture and of christianity is that the Lord Jesus has become Man. I would greatly desire that the reality and profoundness of it should still affect our spirits. God Himself has been manifest in flesh; when we read the words of the Lord Jesus we are reading the words of God Himself and yet it was truly a Man who was here and it was truly a Man that has ascended up into heaven, gone up where He was before, but gone up there as Man.

I trust that is what everyone believes, because this is what christianity is about. We have a link with God through a Man: "the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus". He gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). That was the mind and will of God in sending His Son, giving His Son. Through Him we have peace with God. I say these things

because not everyone is at peace, not every christian is at peace, not every christian is sure what they believe. You should be sure. You are only asked to believe what is in the Bible and if you need help about it you can ask the Spirit of God to help you. We all have to ask and all of us would say that there are a lot of things we do not yet know and perhaps we will not know all of them while we are here. But still, we have the Scriptures in our hand and we have the Holy Spirit to bring them to life, so that we might understand the things that are freely given to us of God.

### **The Lord washing the disciples' feet**

In chapter 13 things are presented from a different point of view. John undertakes to tell us what the Lord knew. He knew that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father. That is the first thing that He knew. Then in the third verse He knew that the Father “had given him all things into his hands, and that he came out from God and was going to God”: three things that the Lord was said to know. I commend to you that they were all things that pointed to His glory and dignity as Man. He was to make a dignified departure. John does not here dwell on the sufferings that would lead up that way; he speaks of the dignity of the Lord departing.

He also speaks of the Father having given Him all things into His hands. Why should it be said, in Scripture, that the Lord knew these things just at the time when He did what He did, that He arose from supper, laid aside His garments, and “having taken a linen towel he girded himself”? It was quite specific — it was no chance matter — the Lord had it in His mind that this is what He would do. He pours water into the wash hand basin — you notice how John lingers over the detail of what happened — “and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the linen towel with which he was girded”. No feature of what He did is left out; it is a complete account of what the Lord did.

Now He comes to Simon Peter. I would judge from verse 5 that Peter was not, perhaps, the first, “and he says to him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” Peter could not imagine that the One he knew as the Lord would take as low a place as this. He was not even prepared to have the Lord do it which we may say was presumptuous on his part. But Peter meant well:

he had got something to learn. The Lord says, “What I do thou dost not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter”.

Peter did not understand at that time what the Lord was doing and may I just generalise a little from that, that there are a good many things, even in our life today, which we do not understand very well at the time but the Lord and the Spirit can give us some understanding when the time comes. Thus it is good to carry our experiences with the Lord in our minds against the day when He may explain to us rather more fully why He took us the way that He did.

“Peter says to him, Thou shalt never wash my feet”. There is Peter being insistent, but the Lord gives him an answer. He says, “Unless I wash thee, thou hast not part with me”. “Part with me” is one of the greatest blessings, surely, that the christian can have, that we should be set alongside the Lord Jesus Christ to enjoy all that He enjoys, that that should be our portion too. We may feel that we touch it but little, but do we touch it at all? It would surely make a great difference to us, actually to enjoy the same privileges that the Lord Jesus enjoys in the presence of God. These are things that we perhaps often speak of. It is a great thing when we come to realise that they are true and that the Lord intends us to enjoy them.

The time did come when Peter did enjoy this for himself. If you look at the second chapter of his first Epistle you will see what he enjoyed by way of having part in a habitation for God, as Paul would speak of it, in the Spirit all built together. Coming as living stones, we all have a part together and become a holy priesthood, serviceable to God Himself. I think Peter did come to something about what it meant to have “part with me”.

We should not leave this chapter without remembering once again that we do need feet washing. The Lord in grace still does wash His people’s feet. That comes out in this chapter; He uses one and another of His people to do it.

That means that it will only get done if someone does do it! It is a very demanding service, because it has to be done with pure water and with a linen towel so that we end up with the person concerned refreshed and relieved of the pressures and defilements of the way, rather than all roughed up and upset. This calls for what I can only call priestly skill. Skill comes



from love. So I need to love my brethren in Christ, and, believe me, one of the hardest tasks that most of us encounter is how to say a faithful word in love and to leave another soul unruffled but rather refreshed and set forward. Yet it still needs to be done because there are defilements along the way and the life of the christian does get spoiled with what we encounter here and what can all too easily draw us aside.

Then we are to serve one another in love. The Lord says that, "If I therefore, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, ye should do also". I can only leave it with us that there is a job to be done. It is not a matter of rebuking all the faults I see in my fellow believers and putting people to rights; that is not what is involved in feet washing. The Lord had borne patiently with the faults of His disciples many a time and when they had needed rebuking, of course He had rebuked them, but you cannot read these chapters of John without realising that the Lord loved His own intensely and cared about them. He wanted them to make good progress in their souls.

If we just set Judas right aside, I think His confidence in them was repaid. If you read the Acts of the Apostles you see a company of men dedicated to the Lord in His service. Some were more prominent than others, but they were all made useful and their experience with the Lord counted for a great deal.

### **The Lord made Head over all things to the church**

Now I move on to speak for a moment about Ephesians, because the fact that the Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand is not confined to John's gospel; there are other Scriptures which bear it out and here is one of them. At the end of chapter one we have that the Lord has been given to be "head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all". Paul says this to the saints in Ephesus who form part of the assembly of God and indeed, at the time, were the assembly (or church) of God in Ephesus. While conditions are very different today from what they were at the beginning, none the less, it is very important that you and I keep before us what Scripture has to say about the church and seek to walk in the light of it. We cannot do more;

the church is spoken of constantly in the New Testament and it is something for which the Lord Jesus has given Himself. He “loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

It behoves us therefore to identify what is the Lord’s property, His body, here on earth at this time. We need to seek to discern it, honour it, respect it and, as I say, act in the light of it. I had not in mind to go into detail about this but rather to lay it upon us all that we should not say that because of the conditions in which the church of God currently is that there is no representation of what is for God by way of assembly response or that I can have no part in it and be obliged to tread a solitary path. What behoves you and me is to look at the Scriptures, see what they have to say about the assembly of God and seek to put it into practice as the Holy Spirit of God may give power and liberty for it. I am not to set any part of Scripture aside because I say it is unworkable.

The Lord’s words are very comforting that, “where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). I know that has a context but nevertheless it is comforting that the Lord comes down to as few as that. Most of us here must have had the privilege at some time of breaking bread in the company of no more than about that number. And I trust that we would all say that we proved the Lord’s presence and comfort at such times.

This is what Paul says by way of what God has done. It is God who gave the Lord to be Head over all things to the church. We saw that the Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand. Well, the assembly of God recognises the Lord as Head over all things, supreme in God’s sight over everything. We cannot say that we walk in the light of the assembly if we do not recognise the Lord as Head both to ourselves and as over everything. Otherwise, of course, there will not be a true reflection of Him. I think, “the fulness of him who fills all in all” is a reference to the way that the assembly of God should be reflecting the glory of the Lord, His fulness, an expression of Himself. That can be found and expressed, even at the present time. Thank God for any measure in which we see and experience some expression of the Lord Jesus Christ among His people.

But you will notice, too, that these verses include a quotation from Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 is very interesting because it deals with the great question as to why man is here at all, why man exists. That is what Psalm 8 is about. "What is man?" The Psalmist looked at the heavens and how great they were, a huge expanse over everything. It does us no harm to go out on a starry night and think about how vast the universe is and how small the world is. The Psalmist is led to ask why man exists at all. When we read Psalm 8 we soon find that man as such has not proved equal to the position that God had in mind for him. So Psalm 8 has really had to wait to be fulfilled, until One came who was worthy of the place that God would desire that man should have.

### **Christ crowned with glory and honour**

So it is very interesting to look at the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews where the Son is mentioned again. The apostle here is looking forward and he is speaking of the world to come "of which we speak". Well, that raises the whole question as to whether we do speak about it. I commend to us all to read the prophets. You may not find that you understand them completely, but they are all looking forward for someone to come. They see the failure of what has been committed to man under the most favourable conditions. Israel's guilt is much the greater because they had the greater light. That is something we need to remember as well: the more light, the more responsible I am when I break down. But here are the prophets who say that they have a link with God and that God has a view of all this and will step in to put things right. They speak about the Messiah, the One who is to come, the Lord's anointed, the One who will do all of God's will.

You see the promise to Adam and Eve being fulfilled in the seed of the woman; you see the prophet that Moses said will be raised up, "like unto me" (Deuteronomy 18:15). You see all that the Psalmists were looking forward to; you see the resolution of Job's problem - who would come between him and God? "There is not an umpire between us, who should lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:33). All of the Old Testament is looking forward to the Man who will come and set things right.

So we see Psalm 8 fulfilled; this is the testimony: — "one has testified somewhere, saying, What is man, that thou rememberest him, or son of

man that thou visitest him?” (Hebrews 2:6). Then it goes through what the Psalm had to say, “Thou hast made him some little inferior to the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast subjected all things under his feet”. All this is fully consistent, you see, with “the Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in His hand”.

This Psalm waited for its fulfilment until the Lord Jesus Christ would come. Now, the apostle says something which is actually comforting. We might not think of it that way but it is comforting: “we see not yet all things subjected to him”. Because, if all things were subjected to Christ now, and the world is what we see it to be, we should say that the thoughts of God had failed. Would you like the world as it now is to be the one in which Christ is supreme? When He comes He will put things to rights and things will be in order.

We do not yet see all things put under Him; things will be very different when He comes. He will reign in righteousness and people will enjoy peace. They will beat their swords into ploughshares (Isaiah 2:4). There will come a time of peace, which is what the Scripture looks forward to. Vile people will no longer be called noble (Isaiah 32:5): things that are topsy-turvy now will be put into order. You could not possibly attribute to God Himself the way things are in the world at the present time. Indeed, it would be blasphemous to do so. God has allowed these to be the times of the nations and although He intervenes, God is not behind the evil in the world at the present time.

But, he says, “we see Jesus, who was made some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death”. That is why He was made a little lower than the angels, so that He could come that way, pass through death. We see Him “crowned with glory and honour; so that by the grace of God he should taste death for every thing”. By faith that is where we see the Lord Jesus to be. That is His present place of exaltation. It is a place that is given to Him as Man.

You may ask why I emphasise that. Well, John 17 tells us about distinctive glories. There is a glory which the Lord had as God, before the foundation of the world. Then there is a glory that God has been pleased to give to Him because He has honoured God and done His will here upon the

earth. Christ has ascended up where He was before, in His own right and power and glory and God has been pleased to give Him a place. He is already crowned with glory and honour. May it be that we give that place of honour to Him ourselves now for His name's sake.

*David Burr*

*An address at Wolverhampton, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2004*

## **JESUS — THAT NAME IS LOVE**

JESUS! that name is love,

Jesus, our Lord!

Jesus, all names above,

Jesus, the Lord!

Thou, Lord, our all must be;

Nothing that's good have we,

Nothing apart from Thee,

Jesus, our Lord!

As Son of man it was,

Jesus, the Lord!

Thou gav'st Thy life for us,

Jesus, our Lord!

Great was indeed Thy love,

All earthly loves above;

Love Thou didst dearly prove,

Jesus, our Lord!

Righteous alone in Thee,

Jesus, the Lord!

Thou all our boast shalt be,

Jesus, our Lord!

Now unto God brought near,

His love dispels all fear;

Thy voice with joy we hear,

Jesus, our Lord!

Soon Thou wilt come again,  
Jesus, the Lord!  
Full joy our portion then,  
Jesus, our Lord!  
When Thine own face we see  
Then shall we like Thee be,  
Then evermore with Thee,  
Jesus, our Lord!

*J. G. Deck*

### **THINGS ABOVE**

THE LIGHT of glory shineth  
At God's right hand above,  
His righteousness and mercy,  
The sunshine of His love.  
For Jesus now is crowned  
In holy splendour there,  
And God is seen effulgent  
In Him so bright and fair.  
The rule of God all perfect  
In wisdom and in might,  
Is known by holy angels,  
His will is their delight;  
Their minds and hearts are subject,  
Each in his ordered place,  
No lawless will seeks freedom  
A course of sin to trace.

The joy of grace is filling  
With music all that land,  
Where grace, enthroned in Jesus,  
Now reigns at God's right hand.  
For every thought of favour  
Set forth in Christ the Son,  
Delights the hosts in glory,  
Their mind with God is one.

The peace of heaven is constant,  
No voice is heard of strife;  
Nor care, nor fear can ruffle  
Its calm with blessing rife.  
The peace of God there reigneth  
In undisputed sway,  
Flows like a tranquil river  
Its restful, endless day.

The love of God pervadeth  
With life and bliss supreme,  
And warmth of deep affection,  
That holy, happy scene.  
There all is of the Father,  
The outcome of His love;  
Wrought by His Son and Spirit  
Are all "the things above".

On things so true, so holy,  
Our minds be ever set,  
In search of wisdom's treasures,  
Unknown on earth as yet.  
For quickly comes the moment,  
When all these precious things  
Shall fill the earth with gladness,  
And Christ be King of kings.

*C. A. Coates*

## THE KILLING TIMES

The Covenanters got their name from the Scottish National Covenant signed by many people in different ranks of society in 1638. To some extent this was a political document and in part the Covenanters were a revolutionary movement, some of whose members were prepared to fight for their ideals. Yet, alongside of this, went a very real witness of many christians who rejected the claim, made, especially by Charles I and later Charles II, to make rules in spiritual matters. King Charles II came to the throne in 1660 and wanted to establish his authority over the church through the appointment of Bishops. To worship in any other way than in the “official” church was deemed to be treasonable. Even to pray, even in private, other than from the Prayer Book, was banned.

One of the first to suffer for the faith was James Guthrie. Guthrie was brought up within the established church, but as a young man at St Andrews University, he came under the teaching of Samuel Rutherford (see page 19). This changed his whole outlook and in his own words he was ‘recovered out of the snare of prelacy, ceremonies and the service book’. In 1650 he became minister of the Holy Rood Church in Stirling.

Guthrie was an interesting man, travelling to London in 1657 to confront Oliver Cromwell over the rights of King Charles I, but while supporting the king he would not accept that an earthly king had any right to make rules in christian matters. Because of this, on the accession of Charles II in 1660 he was arrested and sentenced to death, being executed on 1st June 1661.

In his address from the scaffold he read the following testimony that he had prepared so that it could be given to his young son William:

“Blessed be God who has shown mercy to me, such a wretch, and has revealed His Son in me, and made me a minister of the gospel, and that He hath deigned, in the midst of much contradiction of Satan, and of the world, to seal my ministry upon the hearts of not a few of His people, and especially in the...congregation of Stirling.

“Jesus Christ is my Life and my Light, my Righteousness, my strength and my salvation and all my desire. Him! O Him, I do with all the strength of my soul commend to you. Bless Him, O my soul, from henceforth even for ever.”



The period 1680 to 1685 has been called the “Killing Times” because, in these years, persecution of the Covenanters reached its peak. As a result thousands of christians met in houses, barns and fields. Soldiers were sent to break up these gatherings, or conventicles as they were called, and people found in the fields with a Bible were often shot, as it was assumed that they were on their way to or from a meeting in the open. Many were also fined for allowing conventicles to be held in their houses or on their land, or for giving shelter to those on the way to or from an outdoor meeting.

Many who were shot in the fields were buried where they fell and, because of this, the graves of such martyrs are scattered in various places and not always in graveyards - but let a few of the memorials tell the story.

### **“Shot for carrying a Bible”**

John Murchie  
Daniel Meiklewrick  
Here in this place 2 martyrs lie  
Whose blood to heaven hath a loud cry  
Murdered contrary to Divine laws  
For owning of King Jesus cause  
By Drummond were they shot  
Without trial near this spot

Memorial at Barhill

John Murchie and Daniel Meiklewrick were making their way across the hills near Barhill, Dumfries when they saw a group of soldiers on patrol. Both men ran towards Altercannoch farm, where John Murchie lived, but the soldiers intercepted them.

Earlier that day the same soldiers had found Alexander Linn, a shepherd, out in the hills reading his Bible while he watched over the flock. He was shot on the spot. Murchie and Meiklewrick were found to be carrying Bibles and it was enough to condemn them. They were told to sit on the ground, given a few minutes to pray and then shot.

The soldiers took their Bibles and, later, back at their base in Kildonan

House, they burned them, stirring up the burning pages with the tips of their swords.

Many others were shot just because they were discovered reading the Bible. Among those who suffered in this way were George Corson and John Hair of Kirkconnel, and William Adam of Muirkirk. Soldiers found him as he read the Bible while he waited for a friend. He was shot where he stood. Another similar victim was a farmer in Galloway called MacCory who was discovered one Sunday morning reading his Bible while he tended his cattle. Robert Grierson of Lag shot him at once.

### **Celebrating the Lord's Supper on Skeoch Hill**

Here lies the body of John Blackader  
minister of the gospel at Troqueer in Galloway  
who died on the Bass after five years imprisonment  
Anno Dom 1685 and of his age

63 years

As John for Jesus sake in Patmos bound  
His prison Bethel, Patmos, Pisgah found  
So thus blessed John on yonder rock confined  
His body suffered but no chains could bind  
His heaven aspiring soul while day by day  
As from mount Pisgah's top he did survey  
The promised land, and viewed the crown by faith  
Laid up for those who faithful are till death.  
Grace formed him in the christian hero's mould  
Meek in his own concerns, in the Master's, bold  
Prisoner to reason chained, prudence did lead  
Zeal warmed his breast and reason cooled his head  
Five years on the bare rock, yet sweet abode  
He Enoch like enjoyed and walked with God  
He by long living on this heavenly food  
His soul grew up, too great, too good  
To be confined in jail of flesh or blood.  
Death broke his fetters off, then swift he fled  
From sin and sorrow and by angels led  
Entered the mansions of eternal joy.

Blest soul, thy warfare's done, praise, love enjoy.

His dust here rest till Jesus comes again.  
Ever blessed Jesus, Come. "Come", Lord, Amen.

### Gravestone in North Berwick Churchyard

John Blackader was a well-known covenanter, speaking at many conventicles. When the King appointed Bishops in Edinburgh, Blackader announced publicly, "I solemnly declare and enter my dissent in heaven against this dreadful course of defection." In 1666 he was asked to join the armed rebellion initiated by some of the Covenanters that ended in their catastrophic defeat at Rullion Green in the Pentland Hills, not far from Edinburgh. He was saved from this by his lifelong opposition to taking arms in defence of the gospel.

On Skeoch Hill in Kircudbrightshire (NX859790) there are a number of boulders arranged in four parallel lines. These are the Communion Stones where Covenanters celebrated the Lord's Supper out in the open. In 1679 there was a huge conventicle here and John Blackader was amongst the speakers. Two years later he was arrested in Edinburgh and sent to the prison on the bleak Bass Rock where he remained until he died in December 1685.

We can get a feel for the kind of preaching that took place at conventicles from the records that have come down to us. Richard Cameron was one of the more militant covenanters and he was killed in the so-called battle of Airds Moss along with eight others. He was however a gifted speaker; hear him concluding one of his field preachings:

'Will you take Him? Tell us what you say! These hills and mountains around us witness to us that we have offered Him to you today. Angels are wondering at this offer. They stand beholding with admiration that our Lord is giving you such an offer [of salvation] today. They will go up to report at the throne what is each one's choice.'

Richard Cameron was buried at Airds Moss and his gravestone is at the site.

## **“Canst thou contend with horses?”**

In May 1685, Colonel James Douglas, leading a mounted patrol, discovered a number of Covenanters singing and praying in the hills. The group dispersed fleeing across the moor in all directions. Douglas only had a few men with him and had to decide whom they would pursue. They chose to chase John Hunter and James Welsh, two neighbours, who ran off in the direction of their homes. Both men were extraordinarily fleet of foot but they realised that they could not outrun horses so they headed for the Devil’s Beef Tub at the top of Annandale, believing that the horsemen would not be able to follow them down the steep rocky slope of the dale. They were right, and the troopers reined in their horses, but a soldier took aim and shot Hunter as he bounded between the boulders. Welsh ran on and made good his escape.

A memorial at the Devil’s Beef Tub tells the story simply:

On the hillside  
Opposite  
JOHN HUNTER  
COVENANTER  
was shot  
by  
Douglas’s Dragoons  
in  
1685  
His grave is in  
Tweedsmuir Kirkyard

## **THE COVENANTER’S SCAFFOLD SONG**

Sing with me, sing with me, sing with me,  
To the Lamb our song shall be  
Through a glad eternity.

*Farewell earthly morn and even  
Sun and moon and stars of heaven.  
Heavenly portals ope' before me*  
Sing with me, sing with me, sing with me,  
James Hogg

The words in italics in the “Covenanter’s Scaffold Song” are based on the actual word used by one martyr just before he was executed in the Edinburgh Grassmarket.

**Note** There is considerable variation in the spelling of the names recorded on the memorials due to the fact that in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century there was no established spelling. People would even spell their own names in different ways on different occasions.

## **THE END**

### **The end of Babylon**

#### **Revelation 18:21-24**

The scripture read speaks of the end of Babylon. I do not know of any passage more solemn, or one in which the Spirit of God goes into detail more carefully. I do not know what part of the world of Babylon appeals to you. I know enough of Babylon to know that scarcely anyone gets out of its meshes. It is so skilfully bound together and constructed that it has the means of engulfing nearly everyone and one of the greatest proofs of the Lord’s triumph was that there was a church at Babylon; right in the heart of this monstrosity that would destroy the souls of men, there was a company of people who were going to be translated to be for ever with the Lord.

Now, What is Babylon? It is the world. You may say ‘Why should I not make a way in the world?’ or ‘Why should I not make a name for myself?’ or ‘Why should I not be better off than other people?’ Well, that is the beginning. God saw the danger from the beginning, and He divided the speech of mankind lest they should accumulate on that line and go on to destruction before the time. But what is going to be the end of it, the vast human glory that is around us everywhere today?

The Spirit of God gives the answer: “No more”, “No more”, “No more”. That is what the Spirit says of music, work, marriage, food, and everything. John is shown an angel taking up a stone “as a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall Babylon the great city be cast down, and shall be found no more at all”. This is the fall of Babylon.

You may have escaped the clutches of Satan, but have you escaped the clutches of this world? What is it? It is the scene in which there is no love for the Father, and if you could see the end of it before you, you would keep far away from it in your spiritual history. Do not get close to it! It will get greater and greater. I believe that we are on the verge of great inventions that will stagger us; we are on the line of development in great Babylon that will exceed anything that has ever been seen in the history of mankind, but what is the end?

When you think of entering into this world’s amusements, remember the end of it. I will show you the end of Babylon.

May the Lord preserve us from the little things that war against the soul and break in on the affections on which Christ has the claim. Once Babylon gets a hold of you it is harder and harder to get clear of it, but there is this statement: “In her was found the blood of the prophets and of the saints, and of them that were slain on the earth”. This is that which has undertaken the destruction of the people of God from the very first, even from Abel.

*E. J. McBride (1931)*

*In the next issue, God willing, “God’s Great End”.*

## **A SELECTION FROM THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600 - 1661)**

(Selected by Ellen S. Lister)

The great Master Gardener, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a wonderful providence, with His own hand, planted me here, where by His grace, in this part of His vineyard, I grow; and here I will abide until the great Master of the vineyard think fit to transplant me.

If your Lord calls you to suffering, be not dismayed; there shall be a new allowance from the King for you when you come to it. One of the softest pillows Christ hath is laid under His witnesses' head, though often they must set down their bare feet among the thorns.

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God hath called you to Christ's side, and the wind is now in Christ's face in this land; and seeing ye are with Him, ye cannot expect the lee-side or the sunny side of the hill.

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I know, we may say that Christ is kindest in His love when we are at our weakest; and that if Christ had not been to the fore in our sad days, the waters had gone over our soul.

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Every day may we see some new thing in Christ. His love hath neither brim nor bottom.

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Go where you will, your soul will not sleep sound but in Christ's bosom.

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Blessed were we if we could make ourselves masters of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ; or rather allow ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love, so as Christ were our all things, and all the other things were our nothings... O let us be ready for shipping against the time our Lord's wind and tide call for us.

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Our fair morning is at hand, the daystar is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home; what matters the ills of this miserable life? We are not to stay here, and we will be dearly welcome to Him whom we go to.

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Lay all your loads and your weights by faith upon Christ. Ease yourself. And let Him bear all. He can, He does, He will bear you.

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When we shall come home into Christ's fair presence, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings; then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from a prison to glory, and that our little inch of time-suffering is not worthy to be compared with even our first moment's welcome home to heaven.

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Whether God come to His children with a rod or a crown, if He come Himself with it, it is well. Welcome, welcome Jesus howsoever Thou

come, if we can get a sight of Thee: and I am sure that it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bedside and draw the curtains, and say, 'Courage, I am thy salvation', than to enjoy health, being lusty and strong and never to be visited of God.

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Our love to Him should begin on earth as it shall be in heaven; for the bride takes not by a thousand degrees so much delight in her wedding dress as she doth in her bridegroom; so we, in the life to come, even though clothed with glory as with a robe, shall not be so much affected with the glory that goeth about us, as with the Bridegroom's joyful face and His presence.

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Live on Christ's love while ye are here, and all the way.

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O, if I could be master of that idol of myself, my own will, wit, credit, and ease, how blessed were I! O, but we have to be redeemed from ourselves rather than from the devil and the world; learn to put out yourselves and to put in Christ for yourselves.

## **POWER, SERVICE, GRACE AND LIGHT AS SEEN IN CHRIST**

### **Part 2 — "Grace and Light"**

#### **GRACE**

**"And he began to say to them, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears. And all bore witness to him, and wondered at the words of grace that were coming out of his mouth." (Luke 4:21-22)**

Luke gives us another presentation of Jesus. Luke himself had a very exact knowledge of what Jesus did and what He said here. Indeed he speaks in the opening of the Acts of "all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach." Luke, in writing this gospel, does so with method, and he draws up a relation of the facts, setting them out in order and making every circumstance lend itself to the distinctiveness of the grace of God as seen in Jesus. For He is presented by Luke as the great Vessel of grace, moving in this scene, constantly dispensing the grace of heaven.



How delightful to think of Jesus here in the days of His flesh as presented by Luke in His perfect humanity, touching humanity at this point, coming into this world as a Babe and growing up. We see Him as a Child of twelve years of age in all that was comely and proper to the occasion when in the midst of the doctors of the law. Then on reaching full manhood, standing as a young Man in all the vigour of life on the banks of the Jordan, the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove, and stretching out sensitive feet, for nowhere on earth could a resting place be found for the Holy Spirit other than on Jesus.

As we trace Him in His pathway here, every step was full of grace, and as we observe Him in His goings, how beautiful they were! Think of a Man in a hostile world like this, surrounded by everything that was unholy, but being uncontaminated by anything that belongs to this world! As we hear Him speak He does so with such grace, for He stood up in the synagogue to read the holy writings as was His custom. And as He selected a passage and read, we observe that in order to make this scripture conform to the dispensation of grace, He closed the book at “the acceptable year of the Lord”. In Isaiah the passage goes on to speak of judgment but the Lord Jesus leaves that out, demonstrating that He was here in this world as the vessel of grace.

They “wondered at the words of grace which were coming out of his mouth”. All the words of Jesus were full of grace. But Luke would throw into high relief Jesus as the Vessel of grace. Everything He did and said was in absolute harmony with the grace of heaven. To put it in Luke’s words, “All things which Jesus began both to do and to teach”. Everything He did and everything He said would agree at any point; there was no disparity in what Jesus did and what He said.

He spoke words of grace, and there was nothing in His pathway here to contradict that. So Luke would follow the ways of Jesus in grace that we might know Him in this light. Time will not permit to detail it, but as we see the Vessel of grace in this gospel by Luke, we should understand that the divine fulness in the Vessel of grace would be available for us. So that the spirit of the dispensation is imbibed, and we pattern our ways here by the spirit of the dispensation as seen in Jesus — “the words of grace which were coming out of His mouth”. Jesus never contradicted that in anything

He did, no matter what the circumstance, no matter what His reception, or how people regarded Him or addressed Him, or what the feelings present about Him were. Jesus never contradicted the spirit of grace, it was there present in Him at all times, and the words of grace were coming out of His mouth. What a Model for us.

Oftentimes other words proceed from our mouths. Oftentimes we contradict the spirit of the dispensation. Often we speak to one another far removed in our spirit from the words of grace, and so Jesus as the Vessel of grace would become a model to us so that we might know how to speak, and that the speaking would be supported by what we did. Oftentimes there is great disparity between what we say and what we do, but Jesus was "Altogether that which I also say to you" (John 8: 25). What He did and what He taught were in line at any point. It would not be necessary to bring about adjustment in any way, for all that Jesus did, and all that He said were in absolute harmony with heaven; and so when He speaks His words are full of grace.

Hence, if it is a question of saying anything, what He says is entirely right; it never has to be in any wise modified. We often say things which we have to recall, or take a step which we have to retrace; but in Jesus, the Vessel of grace, everything was perfectly balanced and all was of such a character that He never expressed a word that had to be modified, never took up a position which He had to abandon. He never came to a judgment which He had to cancel. All that He did and said were entirely in keeping with the spirit of the dispensation, which He had come to introduce, for He closed the book to shut out that which would not for the moment fit in with this acceptable year, a time of great favour.

Luke would put Jesus forward as the Vessel of grace, so that we might imbibe His spirit and come out in the same spirit in our relations with one another, and not under any circumstance allow the spirit of the dispensation to be impaired. The spirit of the dispensation must go through unimpaired, no circumstance will allow the contradiction of that. The spirit of Christ would be upon the brethren, in drinking in what is seen of Jesus as presented by Luke.

## LIGHT

**“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” John 9:5**

In John's gospel, Jesus is presented as the Light of the world. John's opening chapter refers to Him thus, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Jesus was here in a relationship which was entirely new to Him, taking a relative place as the Son of God, but here as the official representative of God in a world of darkness. I am not overlooking the fact that as to His person, He is God. John leaves no doubt as to that, but He had come here as the Light. John the Baptist came from God as a messenger, but Jesus was not a messenger, He was God. He "became flesh" and as here in that condition, in the relationship of Son, He declared God. John at the very outset tells us that "the Word became flesh", dwelling amongst us. John would introduce us to the One who would flood our souls with light in regard to God. One who came here in order that God might be known, that all the darkness and ignorance of God might be banished from our minds. Christ shone like the sun, impartial in its shining, the true Light which lightens everyone, that comes into the world. He came into the world as the true Light shining in all its brightness and He said, "as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Jesus when here was the Light of the world. All around was dark, indeed it was like a moral sea of death, the waters of death covering the face of the deep, but the Light in all its brightness throwing its beams across the scene. The world in its disposition and hostile attitude would put it out, for "the world knew him not". He was not known here, but He had come to give the light of the knowledge of the blessed God. John would take us along this road with adoring spirits as we see Jesus day after day in this world shining in strength and glory, making God known at every point. For "no one has seen God at any time", but this glorious Person, this glorious Man, He declared God.

Jesus said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world". That is the position He held here and so the light of the blessed God has shone out in Him. Every believer cherishes divine light as having come through Jesus. If there is any conception of God which one has apart from Christ let us be assured that it is a misconception. It is not light, it is darkness. There can be no ray of light in regard to God that has not come

through Jesus, in whom God was seen shining out in all His fulness, for Jesus was here making Him known. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Now that He has gone out of this world, He has gone, John records, to the Father. He came out from God and He has gone back to God, and between those two points all the light of divine revelation has shone. Now our hearts are lighted up with the knowledge of the true light, and that light will shine until it fills the whole universe. There will not be a dark spot anywhere. That is how John would present Jesus to us, the true Light shining into our hearts now, breaking up all the darkness, dispelling all the gloom and bringing the knowledge of God’s love into our hearts.

Jesus has died so that the Spirit might come down from the Father and that He might fill our hearts with all this blessed light. So that each believer, having received the Spirit, is now able to avail himself, or herself, of all the light that came out in Jesus when here in the days of His flesh, the Light of this world. That light is now deposited in a vessel here, the church becoming the circle in which it shines now, and it will shine, for the darkness is passing and the true light already shines, and it will shine until the whole universe is lit up with that light that shone in Jesus.

In closing let me encourage the youngest to draw near to Jesus, in order to learn these great thoughts of power, service, grace and light. The church is here constructed, and divinely constituted, to become the depository of all that came out in Christ here so that all that Jesus began both to do and to teach is to be continued in this vessel. The book of Acts would show how this vessel is qualified to continue all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.

May the Lord help us by the Spirit to imbibe the richness of all that has come to us in the “man, out of heaven” .

*J. Collie Smith*  
*Australia 1939.*