

Living Water

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A word for today

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD On the 20th January 1897, C. A. Coates wrote a letter about a conference held at the New Year at Weston-super-Mare. He said: 'The Friday evening address must have been a wonderful time – it seems to have impressed everybody. The illustration of the lamp is excellent and most striking and yet it is the perfection of simplicity.' This is the address that so interested Mr Coates.	F. E. Raven	15
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A SONG OF DELIVERANCE AND A SONG OF THE DELIVERER

Exodus 15:1-6

Revelation 5:9-10

I have read two songs. The theme of the first is a great deliverance but the theme of the second song is the great Deliverer, the great Redeemer. That is what people need. They need a great deliverance and to get that they need to be put in touch with the great Deliverer, the great Redeemer. The situation of the children of Israel just immediately before this song was that they had come out of Egypt and they had proved the value of the blood on the lintel and the doorposts, to protect them from the destroying Angel. Following the judgment of the destroying Angel, Pharaoh had relaxed his hand and said they could leave Egypt, but only a few days into the journey they face the critical situation described in the book of Exodus. They have come to the Red Sea. How were they going to get across it? Then they look back and see Pharaoh with all his troops and his chariots pursuing them. What is to be done? As far as they were concerned they had no weaponry to match the weaponry of Pharaoh and his chariots. What power was going to save them?

What power was going to deliver them? The power of the One who had said at the beginning of the book, "I have seen assuredly the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and their cry have I heard on account of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:7, 8). The power of God was there to deliver them!

The Red Sea was before them and the enemy closing in, but they receive this word from Moses, "stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day". Stand still. There is nothing to do. There was nothing they could do for themselves! They were helpless; they had to rely on another power. It is just like the sinner's situation before God – helpless and hopeless.

You know, I almost think as I go through scripture that God loves these impossible situations because it gives Him an opportunity to show the mightiness of His power. That is what happened here. The Israelites stood still at the command of Moses and watched God working a great salvation for them, and that, as I said, is exactly what the sinner must do.

There is nothing I can do to work my own salvation: I have got to rely on another. I have got to stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah which He will work today. That means standing still and looking at the mighty work of Christ on the cross.

The song that Moses takes up has nothing in it that suggests there was anything in his hand or in the hands of any of the children of Israel that wrought the victory over the enemy. It all depended on God. Such is the salvation that is offered for those in their sins tonight: their reliance must be total and their faith must be in what Another

has done – in what Christ has done on Calvary’s cross.

You may say, ‘Well, the situation is different. Egypt’s hordes are not closing in on me’. No, they are not closing in on you. Yet, if these sins of yours are going to be removed, if that conscience of yours is to be cleansed, there is nothing that you can do, there is no power in your hand. In fact, the epistle to the Romans tells me that I am without strength (Romans 5:6). The epistle to the Ephesians tells me that I was without God and without hope (Ephesians 2:12). The epistle to the Romans says we are without strength; we are powerless to do anything, just like the situation at the Red Sea.

So, the sinner’s reliance must be on the work of Another. What a work it is! Oh, just to contemplate afresh the wonder of that work on Calvary’s cross and see the sinless, spotless Victim bearing all that was due to the sinner. All that God felt about sin, He measured out on the head of Jesus at Calvary’s cross. It is very solemn to think of it.

There is not only the question of sin as a root principle but of my sins. If I by faith lay hold of that redemptive work at Calvary’s cross, I can say that that work was done for me. As taking that stand, in simplicity as a sinner, and proving that that link of faith with Christ is sufficient to remove my sins by virtue of His work, I can then have a song in my heart concerning the great deliverance.

I think this is the first song in scripture. The morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy at creation, as Job tells us, but as to songs sung by men and women this was the first song of scripture. What a song it is! They look back and they see the dry land that lay across the Red Sea. They see the waters rolling back and all their enemies gone in the depths of that water. It creates a feeling in the heart that must result in an outburst of thankfulness – a song to God.

There are plenty of songs about in the world but there is not much depth in them. In fact, if you listen to some of them, there is hardly a theme to them but there is certainly a theme to this song and it was a song sung from the heart.

The children of Israel had witnessed Moses raising up his staff and they had seen the waters rolling back, piling up. At Moses’ command they crossed over on dry land. They had seen the Egyptians follow, then they had seen them overwhelmed in the waters. It was not just that the waters crashed down on the Egyptians. God did something before that: He slowed them down. He embarrassed the camp of the Egyptians; He took off their chariot wheels and caused them to drive with difficulty. He was going to make sure that all were caught in the onslaught of death that the Red Sea signified.

Yet every one of the Israelites went through to the other side and they could look back and witness not only their own salvation but witness God’s judgment against their enemies. It produced a great song. What is the theme? The theme is: “I will sing unto Jehovah, for he is highly exalted: The horse and his rider hath he thrown

into the sea.” What a mighty Deliverer the divine Deliverer is! This is what God did in bringing His people out of Egypt towards that good land that He was taking them to.

If we transfer these same suggestions from the Old Testament to ourselves, surely there would be a song in the heart of each believer in the Lord Jesus as appreciating the mighty deliverance that was wrought at Calvary’s cross. Just as here, the Israelites could not do anything for themselves, so at Calvary’s cross the work depended on no human agency; the work had to be done by one perfect Man, our Lord Jesus Christ.

He did it all! No one shared in that cry of “It is finished”. No disciple around the cross, not even the women that were gathered around the cross in John 19, shared in that cry that was uttered. It was uttered by one blessed Man, “It is finished”. The work of redemption that was required to cleanse one sinful soul was all done and it was done to the satisfaction of a righteous and holy God. I can just imagine the echo of that voice in heaven, “It is finished”; the great work was done. On the basis of that cry, God comes out in blessing towards poor sinners such as us.

Down through the ages the gospel of God’s grace has come bringing deliverance, bringing redemption to guilty sinners like you and me and, as a result, there has been planted a song in hearts. It is not a shallow song but a deep song concerning the wonder of the Redeemer, the wonder of the Deliverer.

They sang: “My strength and song is Jah, and he is become my salvation: This is my God, and I will glorify him”. What a moment of triumph it was to stand there, on the other side of the Red Sea, contemplating the mightiness of what had been done and to attribute it all to God.

It was a landmark in their soul history, as Scripture shows, that God would bring them back to, often. Let it be a landmark in our souls also, as we are brought back to the cross and that redeeming work at Calvary. As we look back to it, let it deepen in our hearts, the song of response that is rightly due to God.

I did not read all of the song in Exodus as it is so detailed. It acclaims the strength that belongs to God. It speaks of Him as a Man of war, of what He had done to the chariots and to the captains and it attributes it all to the right hand of God. “Thy right hand, Jehovah, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, Jehovah, hath dashed in pieces the enemy”. Then, further on, it says, “by the breath of thy nostrils the waters were heaped up; The streams stood as a mound; The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my soul shall be sated upon them ... Thou didst blow with thy breath, the sea covered them; They sank as lead in the mighty waters”. I suppose some historians would say this is a myth but it is a tribute to the mighty power of God. Moses’ song takes up that theme and it gives the glory of it all to God.

The apostle Paul, when reviewing the intervention of God in his life and taking account of the mercy of God that had reached him, had a song in his heart to God. I wonder how deep the song is in my heart. How rich is it, that song of triumph? There are many things that get us down in life, many things that discourage us, but there is something about singing that gives vent to the feelings of the heart. There are many hymns that have been written and in them you find persons giving expression to the feelings of their heart in thankfulness to God. I think that was so with Paul but let it be with us as well. So, along with others who have been saved by the grace of God, we pay tribute to the great deliverance.

In chapter 4 of Revelation we see John invited up into heaven. The call is, “come up here”. He has had an impression of the greatness of the divine throne, and those that surround it. Chapter 4, in a sense, brings out the power of God in creation. It reads, “Thou art worthy, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were, and they have been created” (Revelation 4:11). That is a reason for song as well, but the reason in chapter five is even greater – it is the redemptive work of Christ.

They sing a new song, saying, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals”. The Revelation is a very interesting book. I know very little about it, but in Revelation 5 there is a sealed book and its seals have to be opened. Contained in that book are the judgments of God for this earth that we live in. Those judgments have all been given into the hands of one Man, the One whom we know as Saviour and Lord. Into His hands God has committed all things relating to judgment. That is the hand that can open the book in Revelation 5.

It is the same hand that unrolled the scroll in Luke 4 and spoke the words of grace, the same hand that unrolled the pages of grace. What a moment when that hand is used to open the seals of this book and unveil the judgments of God upon this earth. People should shudder in the light of the fact that judgment is coming on this earth. It is coming because God will have His will to prevail on this earth and this is the Man who will effect it.

But, just for the moment, John listens to this song that is raised: “they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because thou hast been slain”. “Thou has been slain”. Think of that!. He is portrayed as a “Lamb standing as slain”. He is the spotless Lamb of God that John the Baptist saw and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). John the evangelist sees Him as the One who has been slain. How touching that is, that before I could be redeemed, the Lord Jesus had to die.

“Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God, by thy blood”. This is in heaven! Do you think we will forget about the blood in heaven? I do not think so! “Thou ... hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and

nation”. How wonderful this is. We can see, as we look out on the world, the widespread effects of sin. All through the world, every tribe and tongue and people and nation are affected by sin. But the triumph of God is that out of every area that has been infested by sin, the blood of Christ has had its effect too, and persons have been rescued, redeemed, delivered and brought to a position where they can take up the song and sing it concerning the One who is the great Deliverer. He is worthy – “Worthy to take the book”. It is not ‘able to take’ as we read earlier in the Revelation, but here is One who is worthy to take it. He has all the qualities that God had looked for in man. Oh the moral perfections of this blessed One: He is worthy!

He has redeemed to God, by His blood, out of all these different categories, tribe and tongue and people and nation. Yes, the price for the sinner’s redemption has been paid but what has the redemption been? These persons have been redeemed “to God”! That is, redeemed in such a way that their voices are raised in a song of praise to God. Let it be so in our hearts. We read “and made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth”.

Well, that is my simple word, that our song to God should be on the increase in the light of the great deliverance for the sinner that has been wrought at Calvary’s cross. Then, too, above all, as we have an appreciation of the One who has delivered us, of the Redeemer, and the price that He has paid, so He should, increasingly, become the theme of the song of our hearts.

May that be the case and may God bless the word, for His name’s sake.

Alex Mowat,

A preaching of the gospel at Aberdeen, 28th December 2003.

GOD’S THOUGHTS IN BLESSING

“And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand, toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on Ephraim’s head – now he was the younger – and his left hand on Manasseh’s head; guiding his hands intelligently, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God that shepherded me all my life long to this day, the Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads...”

Genesis 48:13-16

What we have read is a lovely picture of Jacob, as an old man, blessing his grandchildren. In those days it was the custom that you took the firstborn and gave them a blessing, and that you did that first. Then you took the next and blessed them

and so, on through the whole family. Now here we have Manasseh, the firstborn, and then you have Ephraim, the second son of Joseph, and Joseph brings them to Jacob for him to bless them. Because Jacob's sight was poor, Joseph took care to bring them so that Jacob could easily put his right hand on Manasseh as the firstborn.

It is a wonderful thing that Jacob could become a blessing, that a man who had been so devious in his pathway could, in the ways of God, be brought at the end of his life to a point where he is in the good of God's thoughts for him so that he can bless others. In the previous chapter we find him blessing Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7-10). Surely he must have had something of the knowledge of God in his heart to be able to do that.

Now here it is the blessing of his grandchildren and his heart was full towards them. That is exactly how God is towards us today – He wants to bless, and in everything that He allows in our lives, He knows exactly what He is doing. Jacob knew what he was doing here though he blessed a little differently from what Joseph was expecting. Jacob took Ephraim, the younger, and put his right hand on him and blessed him first; then he comes to Manasseh and he blesses him second.

The first thing that I draw from this is that there is great value in just accepting God's ordering. It may not be the ordering that we would choose, as indeed it was not the ordering that Joseph chose, but it was ordering according to God. The Holy Spirit's comment is that Jacob "guided his hands intelligently". Jacob was in the secret of God's mind. His hands were moving according to the ways of divine grace and love. Jacob, at the end of his life, was in the secret of what God had in His mind. I would greatly desire to know more of the mind of God and of the way that He is working in the present day.

I believe that we find a reason for Jacob's action in the meanings attached to the names of Joseph's sons. "Manasseh" means 'causing to forget', but the name "Ephraim" means 'double fruitfulness'. I would suggest to you that God has first and foremost in His mind that there should be 'double fruitfulness' in the life of every believer. We might wonder how that can be when we think of the things that we have done and that have come into our lives. God would say, 'I have not overlooked that, but there is a 'causing to forget' in My ways, and first and foremost what is before Me is to secure double fruitfulness'.

We see here what God wrought in Jacob. He can speak of the "God who shepherded me all my life long to this day". Think of all the things that had entered into Jacob's history, how he stole the birthright from Esau and of other times when he defrauded people, yet in spite of all that God had delivered him from evil and had shepherded him. As a result Jacob came to know the greatness of God's ways of blessing. His heart and soul became imbued with it and consequently he can come out in the same spirit himself.

Is your blessing just for your relief? Is that what you thought when you accepted the

glad tidings of His love in the Gospel? No, His blessing is so that you might present to others the wonder of the God you know. Let it be seen that the God who has blessed you is the God whom you love to speak to others about.

God's ordering in Jacob's life was perfect. He knows exactly what He is going to do. I love that passage in John's gospel where there were thousands needing to be fed and where the Lord tested His disciples as to what was to be done, but it adds that He "knew what he was going to do" (John 6:6). In the perfect ordering of God there was just a few loaves and two fishes. That was all – but in the ways of God it was sufficient. He knows what He is going to do. He knows the way ahead. He knows exactly what He is doing with you and me. Are we willing to trust His ordering? If we do, we will prove His blessing.

Keith Wickens

Extract from an address at Yeovil, June 2006.

TRANSCENDING LOVE

Sing the gospel of the glory of the mighty Son of God;
Sing the sweet majestic story of the One who was "the Word";
Him, the Father's well beloved, Him, the Father's only One,
On whom heaven itself was opened to acclaim Him as the Son!

Sing of Him on whom the Spirit once descended as a Dove,
There, as perfectly complacent in the restfulness of love,
In the bosom of the Father, there His full, supreme delight,
The effulgence, the outshining of the Godhead glory bright.

Yet a Man in sorrow's pathway, He, the scorned, despised, alone;
Known so well in Heaven's glory, yet upon His earth unknown,
The Creator come as Blesser, disregarded by the men
Whom His God had marked for blessing in that past eternal plan.

Led to prison and to judgment, where no judgment proved to be,
Hailed before a court where justice was a hollow travesty;
As a sheep before His shearers, holy, harmless, mild and meek;
Crowned with thorn and mocked with sceptre, bruised and smitten on the cheek.

Then the darkness and the tempest, Satan marshalling his power;
Earth's convulsion, heaven's blackness in that dark and dreadful hour;
Jesus Christ, the glorious Saviour, laying down His life for those,
Who in hatred mocked and scourged Him, asking pardon for His foes.

Angel lips proclaim Him risen in the early morning light,
By the glory of the Father, and His own inherent right;
Ris'n, ascended, and exalted – Oh illimitable love
Of the Father who has crowned Him in supremest heights above!
Give, Lord Spirit, tongues to bless Him; wake our hearts to burning praise;
Sweeter notes than tongues of angels, love's adoring, grateful lays,
Men redeemed, the church then purchased, sons brought nigh to God above,
Join in symphony unending for the Christ's transcending love!

Mrs C. A. Markham

THE PRIEST ENTHRONED

“And he shall be a priest upon his throne” Zechariah 6 :13

With ready ear and tender heart,
The Saviour heard each tale of woe,
He who had come from heaven above,
Was Man of sorrows here below!

Tempted and tried, He went His way,
That path of suffering, patient, trod,
Perfect obedience every day,
Devoted to the will of God.

On to the cross – behold Him there,
Expression of God's wondrous love!
He died for us, now risen again,
And rightly crowned in heaven above.

And there enthroned as Priest on high
He bears each saint upon His heart,
His ear attentive to their cry,
And active to fresh help impart.

So do not faint, but turn to Him,
In all your need to Jesus go.
The great high Priest enthroned above
Was Man of sorrows here below!

Charles Deayton

THE KILLING TIMES

A second set of stories of the Scottish Covenanters in the 17th Century

“I see Christ wrestling there”

Low tide at Wigtown Bay leaves a great expanse of sand and it was here that one of the most dreadful martyrdoms of the killing times took place. Margaret Wilson

“Love many waters
cannot quench”

Inscription on memorial to
Margaret Wilson in Stirling

was 18 when she was tied to a stake in Wigtown Bay and left to drown in the incoming tide. At the same time Margaret M’Loughlan, a 63 year old widow; was also martyred in the same way.

From an early age Margaret Wilson, her sister Agnes and her brother Thomas had been marked by firm faith in Christ. Though their parents went to the king’s established church, the three children went to covenanter services. In fact, the charge for which Margaret was condemned was that she had attended 20 house meetings and 20 conventicles in the fields.

Margaret Wilson was arrested in April 1685 and together with Margaret M’Loughlan was sentenced by the Wigtown Court to death by drowning. They were to be tied to a stake at low tide and left to drown. Even by the standards of the time, the sentence seemed so dreadful that an appeal was lodged with the Scottish Privy Council who on 30th April ordered the executions to be cancelled. The authorities at Wigtown, urged on by Robert Grierson of Lag, a particular enemy of christians, reckoned that no one would enforce the Privy Council’s decision and decided to go ahead.

On 11th May 1685 the two women were taken at low tide, tied to stakes and left to drown. The older woman was tied further out towards the incoming waves so that she would drown well before the water reached the other Margaret. Possibly those responsible expected that the sight of the first drowning would scare the younger woman into submission.

There were many people on the sands that day. Many were hoping and praying that even at this late stage there would be a deliverance. Slowly the tide came in and overwhelmed Margaret M’Loughlan. Seeing the older woman in her last struggles one of the soldiers said to Margaret Wilson, “What do you think of her now?” Margaret made the remarkable reply “I see Christ wrestling there! Do you think we are the sufferers? No! It is Christ in us”.

As the tide swept nearer she read aloud from Romans Chapter 8:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written for thy

sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more that conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, not life, not angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When she had finished reading, it is said that she started to pray until the incoming Solway tide overwhelmed her and she was absent from the body but present with the Lord.

As the tide ebbed, family and friends took the bodies of the two women and buried them in the local churchyard.

“Prepared to die”

Andrew Hislop had been evicted from his house in 1681, when it was discovered that his mother, a widow with two sons and two daughters, had sheltered a sick covenanter. The man had later died and had been buried by Andrew and his brother. Sir James Johnston, the local Laird, heard of this and had the body dug up; he then evicted Mrs Hislop and her family and destroyed their cottage. From then on, Andrew was a marked man.

In May 1685 he was arrested and taken to Craighaugh. He was condemned to death by Sir James Johnston. Andrew was shot, Bible in hand, and reciting Psalm 118.

When his mother was told that her son had been executed, she asked, “Which one?” On being told that it was Andrew, she said, “It is well. He was prepared to die.” Such is the confidence of faith.

Here lies Andrew Hislop,
Martyr. Shot dead upon
This place by Sir James
Johnston of Westerhall
And John Graham of
Claverhouse for Adhering
To the word of God,
Christ's Kingly government
In His house...

Gravestone at
Craighaugh, Dumfriesshire

The prayer that haunted Claverhouse

Priesthill was, and still is, a rather lonely spot and it was there that John Brown had his cottage. It was a good hiding place for covenanters and meetings were often held there, as was a small Sunday school. On the night before John died, Alexander Peden, a covenanter preacher, sheltered at Priesthill, leaving early in the morning of 1st May 1685. John Brown was out in the fields when soldiers under the command of the great persecutor, Claverhouse, surprised him. Brown was marched down to his house and told that he was to die for sheltering

covenanters. He requested time to pray and this was granted. He prayed aloud and three times Claverhouse interrupted him, shouting, "I gave you time to pray not to preach". Eventually, Brown was thrown on the ground and shot in front of his wife and children.

**John Brown of Priesthill
Shot by Graham of Claverhouse
1.5.1685**

Memorial in Muirkirk Cemetry

Whatever John Brown said in his long prayer, it seems that some thing in it struck at Claverhouse's conscience for later he said that Brown's dying prayer continually haunted him.

Alexander Peden

Alexander Peden was minister of New Luce in Wigtonshire but he, like many others, was evicted from the church for his refusal to accept the authority of Charles II in the church. On 24th February 1663 he closed the gate of his pulpit, striking it three times with his Bible and saying "I arrest (close) thee in my Master's name, that none ever enter thee, but such have come in by the door, as I have done". To those in the church he made clear that the door he was talking about was Christ, as is set forth in John chapter 10.

**In memory of
ALEXANDER PEDEN
(A native of Sorn)**

**That faithful minister of Christ who
Had his unflinching adherence to
The Covenanted Reformation in Scotland, was
Expelled by tyrant rulers from his parish
Of New Luce, imprisoned for years on the
Bass Rock by his persecutors and hunted
For his life on the surrounding mountains
And moors till his death on 28th January 1686
In the 60th year of his age and here
At last his dust reposes in peace awaiting
The resurrection of the just
Such were the men these hills who trod
Strong in the love and fear of God
Defying through a long dark hour
Alike the craft and rage of power.**

Gravestone in Cumnock Town Cemetery

The Lord honoured this bold assertion and, while in most churches where the minister had been evicted, a government nominee was appointed to take over, this never happened at New Luce. As for Peden himself, he took to the hills, living rough, and preaching outdoors whenever he could. He lived in the fields and in caves, enduring considerable hardship for the Lord, occasionally finding respite in the houses of supporters. In June 1663 he was found hiding in the house of Hugh Fergusson and was arrested. Fergusson was fined for sheltering the fugitive while Peden was sent to prison on the Bass Rock

where he remained for over four years. He was then sentenced to work as a slave on the West Indian plantations but he managed to jump ship when the vessel docked in London and made his way back to Scotland.

He had numerous escapes from those who tried to capture him. In November 1684 he wrote in a letter that there were 200 soldiers looking for him but “the Lord has still protected me”. As his health began to fail he arrived at his brother’s farm where he died on 26th January 1686. He was buried in the churchyard at Auchinleck. Soldiers, angry that they had not been able to capture him, dug the body up with the intention of hanging it from the gallows in Cumnock. However they were deterred from this through local protests and instead he was buried at the foot of the gallows.

“Saint killing time”

Peter Gillies was a waulk miller in Peebleshire but he was evicted in 1674 because he allowed a gospel preaching in his mill. He moved to Muiravonside, Stirlingshire and had a mill there.

In 1682 soldiers came to arrest him but he escaped. In 1684 when troopers again came looking for him he fled from his home and lived in the fields, though he often returned home during the night because his wife was expecting a baby. When the child was born, the troops, anticipating that Peter would attempt to return to his house, kept a close watch on the property. Peter did return and was caught.

Together with John Bryce, a weaver who had come to the mill on business, Peter Gillies was dragged away. It was the last Peter’s wife was to see of him. The two men were marched to Mauchline, where with three others who had been arrested elsewhere, they were hanged.

Here lies the bodies of Peter Gillies,
John Bryce, Thomas Young,
William Fiddison & John Bruning
Who were apprehended and hanged
Without trial at Mauchline
Anno 1685.....
Dumbarton, Douglas and Dundee
moved by the devil and the Laird of Lee
Dragged these five men to death with gun and sword
Not suffering them to pray nor read God’s word
Owning the word of God was all their crime
The eighty-five was saint killing time

Memorial at Mauchline Loan

“Persistence in doing good”

During the “killing times” many thousands of people endured persecution, fines and hardship rather than deny the faith. There is a memorial in St Kentigern’s churchyard, Lanark that records that William Tweedale, a Lanark baillie, and

Hugh Weir, merchant, forfeited their lands and other possessions for the faith. The memorial also lists other Lanark citizens who were fined, what in the 17th Century were very large sums indeed, because of their covenanter convictions.

Let the memorial at Whithorn for Hugh and Janet Dunse, who endured persecution over many years, speak for them all. Their stone records:

Hugh and Janet Dunse Kept steady in the faith and a good conscience
--

Gravestone in Whithorn Churchyard

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

THE END (5)

God's Great End

1 Corinthians 15:28

What is the end that God has in view? What is God doing? What do you think that God is doing with you, for instance, or with me? I read the verse in 1 Corinthians to show us God's great end. The part of the verse I want to speak about is that, "God may be all in all".

There are two sides to that. God will be all. As He is God, it could not be otherwise; the whole universe will move at His pleasure. He will control everything, and everything that hath breath will move at His pleasure. Yet that is not God's whole desire – God desires to be all to me. He does not want that merely but He wants to be in the one to whom He is all. God wants to be able to look out on a universe, every single feature of which describes Himself to Himself, and He is going to have it.

He is love, and what does He look out on? On responsive love; and what is the result? God all in all. How could He do that? The secret of it is Jesus, and you have had a link with the secret, and you are going to have a link with the end.. You are going to have the deep and blessed enjoyment, not only of being ever and entirely with God, but you are going to be conscious of your actual response to God forever.

I do not know anything that is more inconceivably blessed than that God should want me not only to know the beneficence and the love and the power of His authority over me but that there should actually be responsive movement in my being to Himself, that God is in me. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him". How is that brought about? If you know Jesus, you know that Jesus is

the revelation of God to your soul, and the beginning may be very small, and the pathway may be very feeble, but the end will be very great – God will be all in all.

E. J. McBride (1931)

This concludes this series

A SELECTION FROM THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD (1600 – 1661)

(A second selection by Ellen Lister)

Let not salvation be your by-work, or your holiday task only, or a work by the way: for men think that this may be done in three days' space on a feather-bed, when death and they are fallen in hands together, and that with a word or two they shall make their soul matters right. Alas, this is to sit loose and unsure in the matters of our salvation.

How soon will some few years pass away, and then when the day is ended, and this life's lease expired, what have men of the world's glory but dreams and thoughts? O happy soul for evermore, who can rightly compare this life with that long-lasting life to come, and can balance the weighty glory of the one with the light golden vanity of the other.

I have heard a rumour of the prelate's purpose to banish me, but let it come if God so will; the other side of the sea is my Father's ground as well as this side.

Christ is a well of life, but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom?

O, come all and drink at this living well; come, drink and live for evermore; come, drink, and welcome; welcome saith our fairest Bridegroom: no man cometh and is not welcome, no man cometh and regrets his voyage: all men speak well of Christ, who have come to Him; men and angels who know Him will say more than I now do, and think more of Him than they can say.

I am in this house of my pilgrimage every way in good heart. Christ is most kind and loving to my soul: it pleases Him to feast with His unseen consolations a stranger, and an exiled prisoner: and I would not exchange my Lord Jesus, with all the comfort out of heaven; His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. This is His truth I now suffer for; for He hath sealed it with His blessed presence.

Happy are they who are found watching. Our sand-glass is not so long as we need to weary: time will eat away and root out our woes and sorrow: our heaven is in the bud, and growing up to a harvest; why then should we not follow on, seeing our span-length of time will come to an inch? Therefore I commend Christ to you as the Staff of your old age: let Him have now the rest of your days; and think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; there shall no passenger fall overboard;

but the crazed ship and the sea-sick passenger shall come safe to land.

I am in as sweet communion with Christ as anyone can be; and am only pained that He hath much beauty and fairness, and I little love; He great power and mercy, and I little faith; He much light, and I bleared eyes.

My counsel is that you come out and leave the multitude, and let Christ have your company. Let them take this present world who love it: Christ is a more worthy and noble portion: blessed are those who get Him.

My dear brother, let God make of you what He will, He will end with all consolation, and shall make glory out of your sufferings; and would ye wish for better work?

Be humbled, walk softly; down with your topsail. Stoop, stoop! It is a low entry to go in at heaven's gates.

I exhort you in the Lord to go on in your journey to heaven, and to be content with such fare by the way as Christ and His followers have had before you; for they had always the wind on their faces, and our Lord hath not changed the way for us, for our ease, but will have us following our sweet guide.

Be content to wade through the waters betwixt you and glory with Him, holding His hand fast; for He knoweth all the fords. Though ye may be ducked, yet ye cannot drown, being in His company. Be not afraid, therefore, when ye come even to the black and swelling river of death to put in your foot and wade after Him; the current however strong cannot carry you down; the Son of God, His death and resurrection are stepping stones and a stay to you; set down your feet by faith upon these stones and go through as on dry land; if ye knew what He has prepared for you, you would be glad.

I am every way in good case, both in soul and body; all honour and glory be to my Lord. I want nothing but a further revelation of the beauty of the Son of God.

No pen, no words, no image can express to you the loveliness of my only Lord Jesus.

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

On the 20th January 1897, C. A. Coates wrote of the conference held at New Year in Weston-super-Mare: 'The Friday evening address must have been a wonderful time – it seems to have impressed everybody. The illustration of the lamp is excellent and most striking and yet it is the perfection of simplicity.'

The "Lamp" illustration is of course based on an oil (or paraffin) light, which was in common use at the time.

This is the address that was given that Friday night, 110 years ago, but the exhortation to believers to be lights in this dark world is as necessary now as it was then.

Lights in the World

John 3: 1-21 4:13-14

I assume that most of us would wish to be lights in the world. If you are going along a dark road it is a great thing to come to a light, and in the midst of this dark world it is a great thing to be a light. You not only know the way for yourself, but you can show it to others. So far as I know anything about myself, there is scarcely anything that I would covet more than to be a light in this scene of darkness, not walking in the darkness stumbling over every stone in the way. A man who has light in him walks in light. That explains the pathway of Christ. He was light, and by reason of that He walked in the light; His disciples could not understand Him. They wondered in John 11 that the Lord should go up to Jerusalem to be killed by the Jews. They were very obscure, had very little light: Christ had light and walked in light. He says, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not". A blind man stumbles; the sun is no good to him as light.

I take it for granted that every right-minded person here would wish to be a light in this world. I want to show you what the nature of the light is. Properly speaking there is now no light in this world except 'the light of life' that is the light of this moment; the light which God has given in this world is the light of life. If you want scripture for it, I turn you to Philippians 2, "Among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life". I do not think that it was quite so until Christ came into the world, then He said, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life".

Once Christ has been into this world, you can have no testimony inferior to Him. Testimony for God now is the perpetuation of the testimony that was given in Christ; the testimony of the moment is "the word of life". We hold forth the word of life because of Christ having introduced it here, and in consequence of our connection with Him by the Holy Spirit.

In order to make the point clear to you, I will endeavour to bring before you the elements that go to make up spiritual life. I am going to make use of an illustration, though you have to bear in mind that every illustration taken from material things must be feeble; although it may serve to illustrate, it is impossible that it could express spiritual truth; it may serve as a figure or illustration, but only as such. Now if I take a lamp to illustrate my subject, everybody knows what a lamp is. There are three distinct elements that go to make up a lamp; you cannot have a lamp without these three parts, they are: the wick, the light and the oil.

If you have only any two of these elements they will not constitute a lamp; if you

apply light to the wick without oil, it would not serve you as a lamp, or if you apply light to the oil without wick, you might have an explosion; if you have oil and wick only, you will have no light; you must have all three elements in order to produce and sustain light. You have first the wick and the oil, then the light is applied from the outside; the wick and the oil would not produce the light in themselves; the light must come from outside.

I hope you will only allow this to remain in your minds as an illustration; you cannot work it literally, but I think it may help to convey what I want to convey to you.

The Wick

When I speak of the wick, I look at the wick as the individual, that is, myself. When I speak of the light, that is what is applied to me, and the oil is that by which the light is sustained. That is the way in which I apply all three.

Of course my illustration fails me in a moment, for in its application I must apply the light to the wick before the oil comes in. This is the reverse of what you do with a material lamp. In the spiritual application the first thing is the trimming of the wick, then the application of the light, and finally the filling up with oil. I want to make it plain to you that when you have all these elements you have a lamp. You are no longer darkness, but you are a lamp; it is not that you have a lamp, but you are a lamp, shining “as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life”. You are the expression of light, and have in fact the testimony of life.

It is a great mistake to limit testimony to what is said. Some think that preaching is everything, that is their testimony, but I judge that it is the church which is the vessel of testimony and the preachers can have very little power when the vessel of testimony is obscured, and that is the reason why often there is so little power now with the gospel; it is because the proper vessel of testimony is marred. The preachers have to preach, they have God’s word for preaching, but the vessel of testimony down here is the church. Testimony connects itself not so much with what people say, as with what they are. The Lord does not concern Himself so much with what people say, as with what they are: “Holding forth the word of life”. That was testimony. What Paul said to the Philippians was: “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke... holding forth the word of life”. I think the apostle had great rejoicing over the Philippians; they answered to the Lord’s mind, but it was not only in what they said but in what they were. It is important to remember that.

Well, now I come back to take up the detail of my illustration. The first thing is the wick. In trimming a lamp it is important to cut off all the part that was black.

The first great fact in God's work in the soul is new birth. I cannot tell you what new birth is. It is not that I am singular in my ignorance; you can no more tell me than I can tell you, but I can tell you of two effects of new birth.

The wick represents, as I have said, the individual; new birth refers to the individual. It is you or I personally that have to be the subject of the operation of the Holy Spirit. A person must be born again. I do not think new birth is exactly the communication of anything, but an effect produced, not through human agency, but simply and purely by the power of God. One is born of the Spirit. It is as though a thread of another description were introduced into the texture of the wick.

I am going to mention two effects of new birth. I believe the first effect is an utter collapse of the person. What I mean is, that in every thing that constitutes a person suitable for this world, new birth produces an utter collapse. Suppose I take a man of the world, he is much like a balloon; the bigger a man is in this world the more he is like a balloon. Man is inflated. A man will not make his mark in the world if he is not self-important. I have seen people clever and capable, but who never made a mark in the world, because they were lacking in certain necessary qualities such as self-confidence and self-reliance; and there are other qualities necessary to make a man successful in the world.

But when the work of God begins in a man, there is a collapse of the whole thing. He perhaps hardly knows it himself. It is like the case of Nicodemus, there is a complete collapse. After the collapse has taken place, a man will often try to keep up appearances, but the man has collapsed, his self-confidence, and all that which made him suited for this world is undermined; that is produced by new birth.

It may be that a man has been so far affected in conscience by the preaching of the word as to have certain concerns. Felix, for instance, was made to tremble, but there was no collapse of the man, nothing of the effect produced by new birth. If you set to work to cut away the foundation of a house, the walls will soon fall down. That is what God does; He strikes a blow at the foundation, and down come the walls, the walls of self-confidence, self-importance and self-sufficiency.

Now there is another effect of new birth; there is a cry, a very feeble cry, the cry of a babe. I dare say you know that the first sign of life in a babe is a cry. So it is when a man is born again; the man has collapsed though perhaps he will try to keep up appearances for a time, but there is a cry, and that cry is the measure of the man; that man is no bigger than his cry. He may have been a big man before,

in his own estimation, like Nicodemus, and also in that of others, but when God begins to work, and the cry of want is produced, then the man is as big as his cry. The cry is the cry of a babe, and he begins like a babe.

That is what God has produced; man cannot compass it for himself, but God can. It is a wonderful thing for God thus to work in a man, and to effect this entire collapse whatever the greatness of the man may have been. In the case of a man like Nebuchadnezzar in all his greatness, who but God could have brought down the whole superstructure of pride and self-sufficiency? Who could produce from a proud man a cry of want? I think everyone would admit that none but God could do it, and it is the effect produced on the individual simply and exclusively by God. There is as yet no link formed with God, but there is a cry and that cry refers to the One who produced it. The Spirit of God produced that cry and it refers to God. What is born of the Spirit is spirit; evidently what is produced in that way by the sovereign power of the Spirit of God refers to God. The importance of it is this, that no one can answer that cry except God Himself, just as in the case of a new-born babe, who but the mother can meet the cry of want? Well, that is how the wick is prepared.

The Light

Then the next thing is the light; the wick has to be made to burn. When we have the wick ready the next thing is to apply the light; when by the power of God's Spirit a man has been born again, the next thing is that the soul has to be enlightened; if I may use the expression, that man has to be made to burn, the light has to be applied to him.

When I come to the subject of the light, I come properly to the work of the evangelist. I can see in Scripture that the work of the evangelist is to enlighten the new-born soul. The soul of the man that is born of the Spirit has to be enlightened; the light of God has to be brought to that man's soul; that man has to be made to burn.

Now I will tell you what the light is. I refer to a few verses in John 3:12-16. You see the character of the light, that it is a light that has come down from heaven. I am assured that the evangelist's distinct work is to enlighten. He may reason and persuade, but also he has to enlighten. The light is from heaven. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven". Why is light from heaven? Because it was to make known the heart of God, and therefore no man could conceive it; it must come down from heaven.

Well, the light has come down; the Son of man has come down from heaven to bring tidings of the heart of God, and not only so, but to clear away every

obstacle that stood in the way of the love of God. What was in the heart of God was a great ocean, but there were certain obstacles that had to be cleared away that that ocean of love might flow out. The first thing to be cleared away was sin; it stood in the way of the purposes of God. The next thing was that the power of Satan had to be broken. Then there was a third thing; the state of man had to be put aside and God glorified in the doing of it. The great point is this: all was effected in the Son of man lifted up from the earth on the cross. He was lifted up from the earth to be an object of faith; the One who perfectly glorified God on the earth, that One was to remove everything that stood in the way of God's purpose, everything offensive to God. All has been effected in the Son of man lifted up. Christ has appeared once in the end of the world "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself", to bruise the head of Satan. That was done in death, and now death instead of being the power of Satan is the witness of God's love, but another thing also has come to pass; man's state in the flesh has been condemned with the sin that attached to it; there is an end of it under the eye of God; all had to be closed up in such fashion as that God should be glorified in everything.

Christ glorified God on the earth. You will remember there are two parts In John 17: "I have glorified thee on the earth" and, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do". In order that He might finish the work that God gave Him to do, He glorifies Him on the earth. It is a wonderful thing that God has been glorified in this world; He has been dishonoured here, but Christ has solved the whole question of good and evil down here. But that was only part: Christ glorified God, but He also finished the work that the Father gave Him to do. He removed everything that stood in the way of the accomplishment of God's purposes; He was made sin to remove it. Whatever Christ touched of evil, it was simply that it might pass away: if He touched a leper the leprosy departed; if made sin, it was to remove it; if He entered into death, it was to annul him that had the power of it. Sin was removed, and the head of Satan bruised in the death of Christ, and man's state in the flesh condemned, and all that God might be glorified.

Now, what remains except that all the light of these glorious things should be applied to the wick? What does it all reveal? Does it simply reveal a work completely done? That is not all; it reveals the heart of God towards man. If you were to ask me what the light is that is applied to the wick, I can only tell you that the light is the love of God. The newborn soul is to know the love of God. That soul has truly to know the righteousness of God, and the power of God, but that soul has to know what is behind it all, the love of God: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Love is wonderful! I say, there may be

righteousness to justify, power to raise up, but love is greater than all. With God His power is the servant of His love, His power is at the disposal of His love, and effects the purposes of His love. Why does God make known His righteousness? That I may be justified and may become the servant of righteousness. Why does He make known His power? That I may have confidence in Him. Why does He make known His love? That I may be responsive to it and make it known to others. Depend upon it, if God makes His heart known it is that you may love Him. If I make known my heart to anyone, I have an object in it; I want the return of that person's affection. I only speak of these things to show what the light is that is communicated.

The wick is now burning. It is the work of the evangelist to enlighten; I will stop for a moment to prove it. There was once in the world a great evangelist and he was pleased to tell us the terms of his commission: he was to go to the gentiles to "open their eyes"; he had no more to do as an evangelist. If I could open a man's eyes, he would find that he had been making a mistake all his life, had been deluded, thought very likely that his best friends were his enemies and that his enemies were his best friends; and when a man's eyes are opened, he says, I have been a fool, I have been cherishing those who were my enemies and hating those who were my friends. And so with the soul that is enlightened, it says, I have been hating God and believing in Satan, and Satan is my deadliest enemy, whilst God is my best friend, because He has loved me and come out to me; He has made known to me His love, that He may have my love in return. My eyes are open now, I really see what Satan is and what God is. And the effect is that he turns from darkness to light, from Satan's power to God. No evangelist ever converted a man; the man turns from darkness to light that he may receive the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among all them who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. And, therefore, it is of all importance that the evangelist himself should have as much light as possible, in order that he may enlighten souls with regard to God; the more he knows of God's righteousness and His power, and the more he knows of the heart of God, the better able he is to enlighten others. You have now the light applied to the wick, and the wick is burning with the light applied; the light is as we have seen, the light of God.

I ask everyone here, have you the light? Is the love of God the light of your heart? Are you prepared to say, Well, if everything fails me here, there is one thing cannot possibly fail me, that is the love of God? How do you know the love of God? He gave His Son, that is the proof; no one could declare it but He. He could say in this world "I came forth from with the Father, and am come into the

world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father”; but He did not leave things as He found them. No, He left the love of God in this cold world. He could truly say, I have left the love of God where I found none. He made vessels to contain the love of God, and He left the love of God behind Him here when He went out of it. When He came out from the Father, He was the only One who knew anything about the love of God. The Lord says at the close of John 17: “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them”.

If you ask what is my greatest glory – and a man’s glory is what his heart cherishes – I can honestly say that the glory of my heart is, that I know God in the wonderful way in which He has been pleased to reveal Himself. There is not a single attribute of God which is now a terror to me, whether it be His righteousness, or holiness, or power. It is a most wonderful thing when all fear of God is completely expelled, that is love made perfect with us: “that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world”. And if you can say that truly, then you can say, Thank God I know that light has been applied to me. I know the love of God, my heart is burning, I am lit up with that wonderful light that has been revealed in the Son.

The Oil

Now there comes in another thing, how is that light going to be sustained? I turn to John 4: 13. It has often been said that we should have said to Nicodemus what the Lord said to the woman of Samaria, and should have said to the woman what was said to Nicodemus. I am sure every one here tonight will be free to own that the Lord is wiser than we are, the Lord knew perfectly the right thing to say. Now what the Lord said to the woman indicates to me, that there was to be something in her that should make her absolutely and completely new. What I mean is this: to refer to the illustration, the wick would be there, but there would also be the Spirit’s work by which the wick would be completely renewed, nothing of the old left. It is not now a cry of want – it began in that way, but it goes on, until morally there is nothing left but what is responsive to the love that has met us – unless indeed there is some fluff hanging about the wick.

You keep the light up in this way; if you fail to supply the wick with oil the light will not last. It is like an impression produced upon a person but which passes away. Many are impressed by the truth, but there is nothing lasting; if you are to have what is lasting you must have the wick and the oil; the latter supports the light. I believe the oil is a type, and a just one, of the Spirit of God.

I do not doubt that it is the Spirit to which the Lord refers. The woman had often

enough come to Jacob's well; it is a figure of the springs of this world to which souls go to find satisfaction and pleasure. The Lord says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life". Just think of a well of water in you springing up to eternal life! I want to show you the connection between the well of water and the light that has been applied to the wick. The well of water is given in order that it may sustain the light. I will tell you how it works; the first thing is that the Spirit of God works in the believer to emancipate his soul from sin and legality – that is the springing up of the well in the believer. It is an undeniable fact that we are so much detained by both sin and legality, we are peculiarly susceptible to sin; the work of the Spirit is to emancipate you; you will never be absolutely free from the sin in this world, but you may be free from the control of sin. It is the great work of the Spirit to maintain you in liberty from the control of sin.

Another thing is to bring me into freedom, not freedom of will as man thinks of it, but into the freedom of God's blessed love. There is a verse in Romans 8 that shows this: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death". That was the apostle speaking in regard to himself, he could say it, and in some little measure I can say it, only not perhaps in the absolute way in which he spoke of it.

It is very important to see that this is the effect of the springing up of this well of water; it emancipates from the bondage of sin and legality. I am sure you would like to taste the sweets of liberty, for liberty is a very precious thing. Nine out of ten christians are not happy because they are not free, and why? Because their hearts are clinging to some poor thing of this world, or in legality doing things because they ought to do them; they are not prepared to sacrifice. What the Spirit of God leads you to is happiness. It is a great thing to be happy; to taste these heavenly things is true happiness. You will not be happy if you are clinging to this thing or that, if trying to keep up a certain status in this world, or if you sink down into the pleasures of a country life; but if you are here in the enjoyment of the love of God, and at the disposal of the Lord Jesus you will be supremely happy.

The Spirit of God is in the believer a well of water, and it is not the only work of the Spirit to emancipate the soul from sin and from legality. There is another most important part of the Spirit's work, and that is to form us according to the light that has been given us. How are people formed in this world? Take a babe that is born into this world, how is it formed? That babe is formed by the affections of which it is the object. As a babe it finds itself in the midst of a blessed system of affections: the love of the mother and father, and, it may be, of brothers and

sisters, too – a blessed framework of affections. Thus the child is morally formed as it grows, and they are all intelligent affections. It is this that makes the difference between man and the beast; there are affections in the brute creation, but they are not intelligent affections. What would this world be without natural affection? It is the one redeeming feature among men, from the highest to the lowest. I thank God He has left it here, greatly debased I do not doubt, but still here. The newborn child is brought up in this framework of affections, and is thus formed.

Closing remarks

Let me say one word more: it is a very great thing in a family to exercise affection; it is a beautiful thing to see love between brothers and sisters, and I believe, beautiful under the eye of God. There is a deficiency where this tenderness of affection is not found. What makes a household beautiful is the tenderness of affection in all the members of it. A christian household is beautiful under the eye of the Lord. That is only an illustration; when I come to the christian reality, I have the wick lighted up. And now I see the individual, like the woman in John 4, has to be formed and framed entirely anew by the relationships in which he is placed. When the light is applied and the wick made to burn, the next thing is that that person is placed in the sphere of divine affection. Do you not think you ought to be very free with a person who loves you? Thank God, I can say one is freer with Him than in the home circle here and that is how you are formed; that love inspires you with perfect confidence, and the greatest enjoyment is to be withdrawn from the engagements of life, and to find yourself able to retire into the sphere of God's blessed and unchanging love. That is the effect of the love of God; the more you come into the presence of it, the more you are formed according to it, and the work of the Spirit is to form you by the relations in which the love of God has set you. It is an unspeakably happy thing to be able to say, I know what the love of God is, and what it is to be in the presence of that love.

I will refer to a third point: there are the relationships in which the newborn soul is placed among believers. The more you are in christian company the more you love those that are Christ's and the more you love them the more your heart will be enlarged; only one thing enlarges the heart, the knowledge of love. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren". In order to complete the framework of christian relationships, you must include the love of the brethren. The Lord says: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," and in the epistle of John it is said, "everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him". Love casts out fear; I can confide in God because of His power, which has been exercised on our behalf, but it is not only His power that leads me to confide in

Him, it is His love that wins my confidence. You can trust, too, the love of Christ; He has not only died for us, but He lives for us, and He is coming and we love His appearing. He is also coming to receive us to Himself.

If I once more refer to the wick as representing the person, let me add that although the texture of the wick may be changed, it is the same individual wick all through. The person who now loves God is the same that was once dark and dead in regard to God. The woman of Samaria is the same person, and yet the texture has been completely changed.

Here are then three things – the wick, and the light applied to it, and the vessel charged with oil. The practical result is, you shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life. You will produce a good impression upon others; they will see that you are supremely happy. If you ask what is a good testimony on the part of the christian, I will give you two marks. He is independent of the world, and yet he is supremely happy. A person may say, ‘How do you get on without the pleasures and society of the world?’ I can give a true answer and say, I am a much happier man without them; I can do without the support of all these artificial things.

The Lord says, “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me”. The Lord Jesus came into this world, and people could not understand how He could be so perfectly independent of things here. The secret was, He lived on account of the Father, and we live on account of the Lord. It is as much as to say that you shall be as independent of everything in this world as Himself, and yet while independent, it does not mean that you are to be like a nun or a recluse; you shall be supremely happy in the midst of it all.

There is nothing that profoundly affects man except the knowledge of God. The love of God is the one thing which has profoundly affected me; mere doctrine never profoundly affected me, nor has it anyone else; it is the love of God that affects you and it is intended to do so. It is what God intends it to do; He intends that you shall be changed in the very texture of your being, and He not only intends it, but He works it.

Just remember the illustration. It is beautiful to think of the wick completely changed in its texture and to think, too, of the blessed light that God applies to it. The Lord lead us into this, and grant that the illustration we have had before us may serve to instruct and edify each one of us. May we know more about it. My desire is that we may be more like lamps in the midst of the darkness of this world.

F. E. Raven

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