



# *Living Water*

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## Recent Ministry

### THE DIVINE STANDARD

#### God's Standard of Holiness and Love

##### Introduction

In previous issues Alex Mowat has considered God's standard for forgiveness and for the walk of the believer. Now we come to the important matters of holiness and love.

When Christians seek a standard they need not look to any human standards or even the standards given by God of old in the law. God only has one standard before Him and that is Christ.

##### The standard of holiness

###### 1 John 3:1-3

For forgiveness, the standard is Christ. For our walk, the standard is Christ. For our purity and holiness, the standard is Christ. Holiness is a subject of which we speak little, and that probably reflects our state of soul. The matter of holiness comes about by frequenting the presence of God. In chapter 6 of Isaiah, the impression that filled the heart of the prophet was as to the holiness that belonged to the One who sat on the throne. In a world where lawlessness abounds, there is a need to realise what is becoming to the presence of God.

John in these verses is looking to a time when the believer's hope will be realised, but he is saying that, if you have this hope, what the effect in you is now. "Every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure". The standard is Christ once again. He has begun the chapter by showing what a family we are in: "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God". What dignity! What privilege! What blessing! To belong to such a family, the family of God! Begotten of God – "born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God" (John 1:13). Having received Christ, we are brought into this family: "that we should be called children of God." Then he goes on to speak of being like Him

when we see Him as He is. "Every one that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure". We look at Christ as He was here and we admire Him. But God was delighting in not only what was seen outwardly in Him, but in the absolute purity of His motives. "Even as He is pure" – that is God's standard. All around the pathway of Jesus, men were seeking to catch Him out, tempting Him. Men were exposing the impurity of their motives, in seeking to take Him by subtlety. God looks at the heart, and He looked at the heart of Christ, and all was purity. John suggests that, since we have this hope in our hearts, we will be concerned about purifying ourselves.

The word of God will have a purifying effect on our lives. Paul writes elsewhere, "beloved, let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear" (2 Corinthians 7:1). The way of holiness needs to be followed by us, and this subject of inward purity and holiness needs to be looked at. The call in 2 Timothy is not only to depart from iniquity, but also to call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Let us have a desire to study the perfections of the Lord Jesus more, so that these features of purity and holiness are more visible in our lives. Mr Darby's hymn puts it:

Yet sure, if in Thy presence  
My soul still constant were  
Mine eye would, more familiar,  
Its brighter glories bear.

I think that the matter of holiness needs to be worked out in the presence of God, and in the light of the fact that the Lord Jesus is coming again. Let us be concerned as to the purifying of ourselves, so that we are not ashamed at His coming.

God's Standard of Love 2 Corinthians 12:15 Lastly, let us consider how we measure up to the standard as far as our links in love together as believers in Christ are concerned. I have not read about the divine standard of love, but about Paul, who strove to show what that divine standard was in practice, in his relations with the saints at Corinth. They had said many wrong things

about him, and misjudged him, but it did not change his view of them at all. He says, "I will most gladly spend". What an account he had. He had made sound investments. Where had he made them? In chapter 11, we see the depth of his sufferings, all that he endured, and through all these sufferings Paul's account was building up. Now he drew on that account in order to minister to the saints in Corinth. But there is more than his sufferings; in chapter 12, he reveals the secret that he had kept for 14 years that he knew a man in Christ, caught up into the third heaven. This experience added to the account which he had. Now he looks at these Corinthian saints and he says, 'I will spend it all on you'. We do not naturally put these two words together, 'gladly' and 'spend'. But he says, "I will most gladly spend" and then "and be utterly spent". He was going to draw on that account until he had used it all. Why? What was his aim? He had espoused them unto one Man, and his aim was to, "present them a chaste virgin to Christ". His aim was that through his spending, through the demonstration of his love for them, they would come up to the divine standard. That is the aim of these meetings today that we might arrive at the divine standard.

We have spoken about forgiveness, and now love. God has shown out His heart, He has set out His love in one blessed Man, the Lord Jesus. When here, the Lord said to His own, "By this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love amongst yourselves" (John 13:35). These occasions of fellowship together provide us with opportunities to demonstrate that love a little more. Let us take the time to express to one another the same kind of love that Paul expressed to these saints at Corinth. Distance or restraint may have come in, but these can be overcome by love. We love to pray about Christians who may live thousands of miles away, but these things are to be worked out just where we are. This is an opportunity to demonstrate that we really forgive, we really love one another, and in so doing we become imitators of God.

Alex Mowat Extracted from an address at Hampton, February 2009. Concluding this series

## SERVING GOD

Introduction Last night my eight year old son asked me, 'What are you going to talk about tomorrow?' I told him that I was thinking of speaking about service. He said, 'You mean, helping God'. Well, that is one way of putting it; in one sense you cannot help God but we can each be of service to Him. And that is what I want to speak about tonight. Firstly, to see service in perfection in the Lord Jesus. If you want to think about any subject start with the Lord Jesus. See what He said and did. The Lord Jesus shines supreme, always. Then I read elsewhere about service carried out by a boy and a girl and a man and a woman. That encompasses every one here, for if, as Christians, we want to serve God, it is open to every one of us.

The background given in all these Scriptures is one of difficulty and in Britain today if you want to serve God, it will not be easy. Perhaps it has never been easy but it is not easy today.

The Lord Jesus the Perfect Servant — John 13:1-7. Look at the Lord Jesus in this scripture in John. We see one important aspect of service which is the willingness to go down, to set aside position and serve. The Lord Jesus' life was marked by that every day. Every day of His life was marked by service and a desire to please His God and to honour His God and to show the compassions of God, the love of God to other people, to men, women and children. He came here to serve, to serve God and to serve men and women too.

In this passage His disciples were together and Judas was there as well, "the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas...that he should deliver him up". That is the background. Think of what it was for the Lord Jesus to be betrayed. Most of us have experienced being let down but think of the betrayal of Judas. The Lord Jesus felt it deeply.

Despite that background Jesus was here to serve. He was not thinking about Himself. Christianity and the work of God in the soul help us to think about others, first of all to think of our

Saviour God and His blessed Son and not to be occupied just with what pleases ourselves. Perhaps more than any one here, I think a lot about what worries me, what makes me happy and so on, but the work of God is to elevate our thoughts so that we think about the blessed God and what is due to Him. So I should desire to serve Him and serve His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, here.

The Lord Jesus served these disciples. He did something that was beyond them. He did something that was menial - the job of a slave. The originator of life, the One "by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2), went down and He washed the disciples' feet. It tells us that He made Himself, of no reputation (See Philippians 2:7). His desire was to serve. Much service is hidden; much service is lowly, not spectacular, not seen by others. The Lord washed the disciples' feet. He demonstrated the most blessed service to them. Peter said, 'No, no!' "Thou shalt never wash my feet". Peter loved the Lord; he did not want to see Him going down. Yet Peter had to learn that this was the way of service set out in Christ.

Think of the Lord Jesus, He made Himself of no reputation. He despised the shame (Hebrews 12:2). Think of Him being hung on the cross. That is a service that is far beyond us. He gave up His life, His body, His blood, His reputation, that we might be saved, that we might have the love of God in our souls and know the sureness of what is to come.

The Lord served as the great pattern for us. He laid aside His garments and washed the disciples' feet to bring relief, refreshment and blessing to them.

The Boy Samuel — 1 Samuel 3:1-10 Now, in the book of Samuel, the passage here shows a very difficult background. Eli's sons desecrated the things that were precious to God. We live in a day when people speak ill of the Lord Jesus, they speak ill of things that are precious to God. Eli lived in a day like that. Perhaps many here would say much about Eli - what a weak individual he was and how feeble - but Eli was a godly man, a man that



honoured God. He might have been feeble, he might not have had a grip of his family, but he honoured God.

We read here that “the lamp of God had not yet gone out” (v.3). Until the Lord comes the lamp of God will not go out, we can be assured of that. God’s testimony here and witness will not go out. There will be a witness until the Lord comes. As Christians we might think about ourselves and worry about being few but God will make sure there is a witness to the fact that the Saviour is living at His right hand.

When I think about Eli, rather than dwell on his feebleness, I like to think about what was right about him. He looked after the lamp of God, he ministered to this child, Samuel, and he detected the speaking of God. He might have been slow, but he detected God’s speaking, he did know God, and at the end of his life when he heard that the ark was taken he was deeply affected; it was the end of his life. He loved the ark. He was a man who was godly; he was weak but he was godly. I would encourage those who are older to see that there is a testimony and a witness to those who are young in being godly and in continuing and being sustained in a life of piety, a life of godliness.

It is nearly 25 years since the Lord took my grandfather. He lived in my parents’ house for over 10 years. I cannot remember much of what he said, but I can remember him praying - it was a privilege of being in the same house. I remember the way he spoke to his God; I have never forgotten it, he spoke to God as someone he knew. I would encourage us all, whether we are young or old; but especially those who are older, that you can be a blessing to those who are young just by being who you are, living a life of godliness and dependence upon God. There is a great witness in that.

Two days ago, an old Christian in the place that I come from rang me up. It is a grief to me that he is failing. He has lost his eye, his sight is failing, he can scarcely walk and he has to be helped into his house. Despite all that he rang me up to tell me he was praying for me. If you want to serve you think of others.

Do not be occupied with yourself. Think about the Lord's people and what blessing you can bring to them. If you can do nothing else you can pray for them.

The important message in this Scripture that we read is that Samuel said, "Here am I". And I would encourage every one here to say to God, 'Here am I'. It is an opportunity for you to serve God. Say, 'Here am I, I am available. I might be young, I might not know much, I might be small but, Here am I'. If we want to serve we need to be available. Do not put it off until you are older. Samuel did not say, 'I will wait until I am an old man like Eli'. He was young, he was committed.

The other thing I would say about Samuel is that there are many years of his life on which the Bible is silent. We sometimes think that service is all about doing big things but for many years we do not read about anything that Samuel did. The Lord's life here, until He was 30, was not public. Other people did not see it. Think of Moses, 40 years in the wilderness just serving as a shepherd. God appreciates those hidden years of service and honours them.

Well, this is how Samuel started, "Here am I". Eli directed him. Eli could detect God's speaking and what a blessing he was, in that way, to Samuel and Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant heareth". Samuel was someone who was here to serve.

The Girl Captive — 2 Kings 5:1-3 In Kings we read of a little girl. There were two things that impressed me about this child. The first thing is that she was not bitter. If you want to serve God, you cannot be bitter because it will consume you. This girl had been taken from home. She had every reason to be bitter but she was not; she thought about others. Sometimes Christians have good reason to be bitter. Some Christians I know have been treated very badly. Some encounter severe persecution. If you are feeling bitter I would encourage you to consider Joseph. Joseph had some of the best years of his life stuck in a prison. At 17 his brothers threw him aside into the pit, then he was sold as a slave and finally he was unjustly cast into prison. Then just

when there appeared to be some hope of his release the man that he relied upon forgot all about him. So for thirteen years Joseph remained in prison.

Was he bitter? The Bible records that he named one of his children “Manasseh—For God has made me forget all my toil...” (Genesis 41:51). I would encourage you, if you are bitter, to see it is God who can cause you to forget. Turn to the Lord in prayer and ask Him for His help to cast away any bitterness and to be able to forgive.

I was very struck recently by the Scripture about the man who was forgiven 10,000 talents. It was a big number. 10,000 to the Jew meant a number that you could not get your head around, it is too big. That is what we have each been forgiven, a number that we cannot take in. Maybe it will take the whole of our life to appreciate how much we have been forgiven. Every sin in the sight of a holy God is totally objectionable, but through Christ we have been forgiven the whole of that great debt.

Well, if we have been forgiven may we seek the Lord’s help to forgive others and may we be like this maid who, despite being taken from her home, was not bitter. Her desire was that someone else should be blessed. That should be the spring in the Christian’s heart, the desire for blessing to spread.

Then the second thing is that she had absolute confidence in God. The Lord tells us that there were many lepers in Israel at that time and that none of them was healed save Naaman the Syrian, but she knew the power of God and said, “Oh, would that my lord were before the prophet that is in Samaria! then he would cure him of his leprosy”. She had conviction about the power of God and with that conviction in her heart, she served.

She only says these few words and that is all that is said about her in Scripture, yet what results there were. There was a witness to the king of Israel, Naaman was healed and he became a worshipper. We might not know much. We might not have a huge knowledge of Scripture but if we believe in God and rely

upon Him, wonderful things can come from that. There was a blessing for Naaman; his flesh became like hers, like that of a little child (v. 14). We can all be a blessing to others if we desire to serve. It is a simple thing that she did, she just said a few words but power came from her faith in God.

Nicodemus — A man used of God — John 19:38-40 In the Scripture in John's gospel I read about Nicodemus. We find Nicodemus three times in the Bible. Nicodemus first came to Jesus by night. He was an important man; he had something to lose and it seems that he first came to Jesus secretly.

The Lord Jesus told him wonderful things. In my work I travel a lot all over the world and in every hotel I go to I open the drawer of the bedside cabinet to see if there is a Bible in there and a lot of them have Gideon Bibles. In the very front of the Gideon Bible you will find some of the words that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..." That verse is translated into a whole range of languages and printed in the first few pages of the Gideon Bible. "For God so loved the world..." What wonderful words Nicodemus heard. Perhaps he went expecting something small and he came away with something greater than he could ever take in. And if you come to Christ for the first time you will find that He will reward you with more than you can imagine.

Well, at the end of John's gospel we see Nicodemus associated with the Lord in death. The Lord was rejected and Nicodemus was prepared to serve the Lord despite the fact that perhaps it was at the risk of his life. He came for the Lord's body; he begged Pilate for the body of Jesus. Think of what had happened to Jesus. He had been crucified, had been rejected, had been spat upon and crowned with thorns. Nicodemus came with Joseph and was prepared to be associated with the Lord in death, with the rejected Saviour. God always has someone in reserve. He had Nicodemus in reserve. Nicodemus was there; he was associated with the Lord in death and I just take from that the simple impression that if we want to serve God we

should not be ashamed of the death of Jesus and the reproach of the Christ.

There is a verse in the Lamentations: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, whom Jehovah hath afflicted in the day of his fierce anger" (Lamentations 1:12). The death of the Lord Jesus and His suffering for us is something that should be precious to us.

It is a wonderful privilege for a Christian to remember the Lord Jesus, for it is only in this scene that we are able to do it. We will not remember Him in heaven for we will be with Him then but now we are able to remember the Lord Jesus in the way that He has asked in the breaking of bread and it is a great privilege. It should move our souls towards Him. We see the bread and the cup; does it not move our hearts towards Him who gave up His life for us? Is it nothing to us? Surely not! If we love Him it will move our hearts towards Him. Nicodemus was a man whose heart was moved towards Him and he did this wonderful and precious service. He who first came at night came with Joseph. He was prepared to be associated with the Lord Jesus in death.

The Lord Jesus is living, but if we want to serve Him we have to remember that He is rejected and once actually went into death itself. Now He is living. Nicodemus is a wonderful testimony to the power of God's love in that he was changed from a man who first came secretly by night to a man who was courageous, courageous in God's things. He was prepared to serve. In a moment when there was no one else available he and Joseph were available. A Woman who worshipped — Mark 14:1-3 I want to finish with a reference to worship and praise. In Mark 14 we see a woman who honoured the Lord Jesus. She brought what she had, a flask of precious ointment, and she broke it. It was poured out once for all. It could not be used again. I would encourage us all in honouring and praising the Lord that what we say should pour from the heart and be fresh and living.

The Lord loves us to express our appreciation of Him, of what He has been to us even in the past week - as a wonderful Shepherd, as a wonderful Friend, as One who has cared for us. Every one who loves the Lord Jesus can say something appreciative of Him, can serve Him in that way.

As with the other scriptures we have considered, what this woman did is set against a very dark background. There were those there who were "...seeking how they might seize him by subtlety and kill him". Against that backcloth this woman came and honoured the Lord Jesus and served Him.

Whatever the backcloth is in Britain or where you live and where you come from, you can honour Him in the same way that this woman did. You can bring something from your heart and say something to Him about what He means to you and therefore you can be amongst those who serve Him.

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When I look around I see many who have been serving the Lord for many years. May you be an encouragement and blessing to others. If you have not started out on the journey of service may you say to the Lord today, "Here am I".

Simon Burr

An address at Basildon, May 2009

## Poetry Selection

### **REMEMBERING THE LORD IN THE BREAKING OF BREAD**

O Lord, we await Thine appearing and kingdom,  
When o'er the whole earth Thy dominion shall spread,  
Yet now we acknowledge Thy rights, and assemble  
To call Thee to mind in the breaking of bread.

As gathered again where Thou still art rejected,  
Responding to Thee, who for us gave Thine all,  
Thy patient devotion, Thy sorrow, Thy suffering  
Have touched all our hearts, as Thyself we recall.

How fragrant to God was Thy pathway so holy,  
'Not My will, but Thine', blessed Lord, Thou did'st say.  
The rich One, who e'en was cut off and had nothing,  
Whose life from the earth was once taken away.

Lord Jesus, Thy Name will continue for ever,  
From all Thy creation shall songs soon ascend  
Now we, in the bonds of one fellowship gathered,  
Yield homage to Thee who will love to the end.

Charles W. Cooper

## **THE WORD OF THE CHRIST**

See Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Lord, let thy word dwell richly in my heart,  
Imparting calm and giving peace within;  
That I may never from Thy will depart,  
But keep afar from all the ways of sin.

And formed and moulded by thy word, O Lord,  
Give me the grace and power its truths to teach;  
No power but Thine can rightly wield that sword,  
No grace but Thine a sinner's heart can reach.

When in my house, or walking by the way,  
Oh! Let my converse be concerning Thee.  
And when I rise, or at the close of day,  
Let thoughts of Jesus often dwell with me.

Grant too, O Lord, for Thine it is to bless,  
That of Thy word my lips may often speak,  
That Thy great Name I may with joy confess,  
And in my ways Thy glory ever seek.

And let Thy word so govern all my ways,  
That as a sign it may be on my hands;  
And as a frontlet twixt mine eyes, the traits  
And life of Jesus may be my commands.

So rule my life, O Lord, and all possess  
That I may be, or have, while here below,  
That in my ways I daily may confess  
That I am Thine and thy great love I know.

Malcolm Biggs (1875 – 1941)

## **CHRIST, ABOVE ALL GLORY SEATED!**

Christ, above all glory seated!  
King, triumphant, strong to save!  
Dying, Thou hast death defeated;  
Buried, Thou hast spoiled the grave!  
Thou hast gone where now is given,  
What no mortal might could gain,  
On the Father's throne in heaven,  
In Thy Father's power to reign.

We, O Lord, with hearts adoring,  
Follow Thee beyond the sky.  
Hear our prayers, Thy grace imploring,  
Lift our souls to thee on high.

Hail! All Hail! In Thee confiding  
Jesus, Thee shall all adore



In Thy Father's love abiding  
With one Spirit evermore!

5th Century Translated by J Russell Woodford

## Testimony Section

### **JESUS CHRIST IS REAL: HE IS WITH ME DAY BY DAY**

I grew up in an Islamic, Muslim family and I remember when I was in high school I went a lot to the mosque and I was always asking questions about Allah. I really liked to be close to Allah and would stay at the mosque and pray and talk and worship. But I was not happy because I did not know how to please Allah. When my father died when I was in the 12th grade, for a long time I wondered what I had done wrong so that my father died.

I started to think about Islam more, to find the reality of it. Every day I prayed more and more, to get closer to Allah. One day I was in a library trying to learn English with a large dictionary; a lady came in and started to talk to me. Then she asked, 'Are you reading the Bible?'

I did not know what 'Bible' meant so I said, 'No, this is a dictionary' She started talking. I did not know a lot of English but we got by with some foreign words and some sign language. Then she asked, 'Do you know Jesus?'

I said, 'I do not know Him.'

She told me who Jesus is and how important knowing Him was to her.

I said, 'You are talking about Isa', because Muslims do not use the name Jesus. This was the first time I heard the name "Jesus".

Over the next few weeks this lady spoke to me again and sometimes her husband and son and daughter came there. Then they asked me to give them my telephone number, and later they asked me to go to their home. They were very nice, very good; they did not ask me what religion I have, who I am, where I am from, they were just very nice. I asked them to come to my home and they came. And they started going and coming and their children, they came to my

house and I went to their home. There was something different between them and others, I could see. For example, the first time I see they are holding hands and praying. And I saw they prayed for me. It was really sweet of them. I saw them when they are going out sometimes the mother prayed for her children. I saw husband and wife pray. They did not know that I check all these things, it was so amazing for me.

I went to their home one day and asked them, 'What makes the difference between you and other people?' They replied that they were Christians. I said, 'So, I am Muslim. What is it makes the difference between me and you, just because you are Christian. I am Muslim, I am good'. They reply, 'No, we are not good; the One in us is good'. I did not understand that. So they told me that it was not religion or rules that made them different, but love for Jesus. Because He had done so much for them, they wanted to follow Him and be like Him and keep close to Him.

I told them I wanted to hear more. The lady said, 'Assad, do you really want to know about it?' When I told her that I did she went and got a Bible which she gave to me. She said, 'Because you ask I will give this to you. The first night when I saw you and we talked together, I prayed that one day you would ask me about the Bible. This book has been in my room for a long time and every day I prayed that you might ask for a Bible.' I started crying because I saw how much she loved me as a person.

Well I started to read the Bible but it was very hard. As a Moslem I could not accept that Christ can be God. Everything I read in the New Testament was beautiful. Every teaching was good. But I could not accept that Jesus Christ was God. When I read the gospel of John I threw the Bible on the floor and kicked it.

When I asked my Christian friends about this, they said, 'Let Him show Himself to you'. I laughed, for in my mind He was dead. I was very angry but my friends were patient and just told me to go on reading the Bible. So that is what I did, but I still could not accept the divinity of Christ.

Eventually I was persuaded to go to a camp meeting. When the preacher started to speak I thought he was looking at me because everything he was talking about was a reflection of my life. I thought my friend had told him about my life. The text was from Luke 15 and the preacher was talking about the son who left his family and

what happened to him. As the story unfolded I started crying because I could see myself and my life.

The son had gone away and had done all the bad things but the father was still waiting for him. The son wanted to go back home but he is scared, maybe his father will not accept him, but the father is outside waiting for him. There was no condemnation, no argument; he accepted him. The speaker then asked anybody who wanted to know God as Father to come up to the front. I was the first person to run to the front and sit down. I started crying, I could not stop because of the joy that had come into my heart. I knew I just wanted God to be my Father. I wanted Jesus to hold me in His arms.

I do not know, everybody maybe has different experiences but most of us when we accept Christ would say that it was the most joyful thing that had happened in our lives. It was like a fire coming from my head to my body. Jesus had filled my heart and I had peace with God

I read the New Testament 10 times before I accepted Christ, but when I accepted Christ I could understand it. I was reading Ephesians where it tells us that we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. I thought about that, then suddenly it came home to me what it meant. I started running about the house with joy. I realised that all my life God had been guiding me step by step. He brought me to the library and at the same time He was working with the lady so that she would come that day to the library to meet me so that I might come to Christ.. He chose me before the foundation of the world.

Christ for me is everything. I do not know how I can live without Him. He is real. I would tell every Muslim that Jesus Christ is real. He is with me day by day.

Assad

This concludes this series of testimonies from former Muslims

## A Voice from the Past

### THE SPIRIT WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED

God teaches us much by contrasts. In the beginning of His operations as to an earth in chaos, He divided the light from the darkness. It is interesting to see how a dark background is often used in Scripture to bring into relief the light of God. This is singularly evidenced in the way reference is sometimes made to the Holy Spirit of God. What He is not is stated, to bring into relief who He is.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians states that we have received "not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). The Corinthians lived in a city famous for its architecture, notorious for its profligacy, proud of its wisdom, where the spirit of this world was all around them. The Holy Spirit was not such a spirit. He would introduce them into God's world, for He searches all things "even the depths of God". The blessed Spirit would make known to them, did they but make room for Him, the hidden wisdom of God, predetermined before the ages for our glory. He would reveal to us things which eye has not seen and ear not heard, but things which God has prepared for them who love Him. As we recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit and do not grieve Him, He would conduct us into the greatness of the revelation of God.

In writing to the believers at Rome, Paul tells them, that they had not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but the Spirit of adoption or sonship. He is not a spirit of bondage. We are not brought into a place of slavery but into the liberty of sonship. We are, in the language of the parable, to have shoes on our feet, as suits sons in the house of their father. (See Luke 15: 22; Song of Songs 7:1) In the power of that blessed Spirit we are able to say, "Father" to God. We are brought into the consciousness of this relationship with Him, that in the unclouded favour of His countenance we may address Him as "Abba, Father". Two features mark those who have received the Spirit; they are able to say "Lord" to Jesus and they are able to say "Father" to God.

When the apostle Paul, at the end of his course, was in prison in Rome, awaiting his martyrdom, he was much concerned as to the

continuance of the testimony of our Lord. All who were in Asia had turned away from him. We gather too, that those in Rome itself had been neglectful of the apostle in his faithful course to the end. He wrote to Timothy, a young man, one delicate in health, and inclined to be timid, to take his share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If the testimony of our Lord was to be continued it must be in suffering and in the power of the Holy Spirit. What kind of spirit had Paul and Timothy received? Not one of fear. So Paul encouraging his child in the faith to go on, wrote, "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind", (2 Timothy 1:7). The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of cowardice. Timothy was to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ in the face of intense opposition. He had been somewhat neglectful of his gift ; he had to stir this up. Had he the power to do this? Yes, surely! The Spirit God had given him was a spirit of power. If love was waxing cold and Demas had loved this present age rather than the appearing of Christ, then Timothy had the spirit of love. If wisdom and discretion were needed and they never were more so than when disintegration was working in the church and believers were turning away from Paul, then he had, above all others, received from the Lord light and ministry as to the church. Timothy had the Spirit of a sound mind, giving him wise discretion in the service of the Lord.

Let us learn by these contrasts, to know more of the blessed Spirit of God, for He is to be known as the Lord says, "Ye know him," John 14:17. He delights to be known in the intimacy of communion. To know Him, would separate us more from the course of this present age, as not of this world, would bring us more into the joy of sonship in addressing God as Father, and in a day of difficulty, would give us power, love and wisdom to tread a path pleasing to God.

Christopher Menzies.

## PRIESTLY SERVICE SEEN IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

While “the Revelation of Jesus Christ” is “to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass”, one great purpose in it is to stimulate intelligent priestly service on their part. So at the outset John is led to exclaim, “To him who loves us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”. It is of all importance to remember that all true Christians are priests of God and can engage in His priestly service wherever they may be. Peter, writing to the strangers scattered abroad—and how many are scattered today—reminds them that they are “a spiritual house, a holy priesthood” (1 Peter 2:5), and also a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9); while John, alone in Patmos, is evidently in full priestly vigour—a great example for any who are isolated. From chapter 4 of this book there is the presentation of the public dealings of God with the world—future as to the actual fulfilment, but embracing the principles which, in measure, characterise His over-ruling government and providence today. This latter part of the book shows that in every phase of His activities God secures a priestly company who praise and worship. In chapter 4, the elders and four beasts, or living creatures, praise and worship Him as Creator, and in chapter 5, as Redeemer; in chapter 15, the company standing on the sea of glass worship Him as “King of nations” (Darby Translation); while in chapter 19:1-5, a most extensive note of praise is addressed to God as Judge, and the elders and the living creatures again fall down and do homage. The elders and living creatures are symbolical of a company which includes believers of this present time, and in indicating features and activities that will certainly mark us later, is surely intended to promote these now. It is a priestly company, for each one has a harp and a golden vial full of odours, and their description as living creatures and elders implies that their priestly service is characterized by the energy of life and the fruit of experience.

How pleasurable to God must be the worship that flows from a heart that has proved Him by experience. Surely the present time of trial is intended to bring about such a practical knowledge of God and His ways that believers may, as the fruit of experience, become worshippers of Him as Creator, Redeemer, Ruler and Judge! Who should be so qualified for this service as those who are His sons by faith in Christ Jesus, and know Him in the purposes of His love? The Creator Have we not, during these testing years, realised our dependence upon our Creator more than ever before? Have we not been taught to appreciate the constancy of His care and the bountiful way He causes the earth to bring forth its increase? Have we not learned the personal nature of His control over creational operations and processes—His ability to use them even to stay the wrath of man and alter the course of world-war? Should not these experiences cause each to fall down before Him in worship, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11). The Redeemer God also desires that we should value Him more as Redeemer. His present ways with the nations are to some extent judicial, and will be more so when the Lamb takes the book and breaks the seals thereof, as in chapter 5. But now, as then, the primary concern of God is to exercise His rights in redemption. As we see God working in the present happenings, to make way for the gospel and to have men for Himself, it surely leads out our hearts in worship to Himself, and to the Lamb who has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every tribe and nation, and has made us to our God kings and priests. The King In chapter 15 there is seen a company praising God for His works, and then able, in a spirit of worship, to vindicate Him in His ways as “King of nations”, describing them as “righteous and true”. Present circumstances test as to the measure in which this can be done. Has God ever been appreciated as King—the blessed and only Ruler—as He is now? Having learned that it is He who “changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Daniel 2:21),

we may well bow before Him in His eternal majesty, yet blessedness, with the deepest reverence and homage. How fitting the note of praise: "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name". The Judge Finally, in chapter 19, a great multitude in heaven is heard ascribing glory to God as Judge. As Christians, we have come "to God the Judge of all" (Hebrews 12:23), and should be worshippers of Him in this character. The fact that God is Judge is the guarantee that right will prevail in the universe. What a triumph for God to have on earth now those whose judgment is in accord with His, and who are worshippers of Him, not only as Creator, Redeemer and Ruler, but also as Judge!

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May He help us all to understand the vast scope of priestly service open to those whom the Lord Jesus has made "priests unto God and his Father"! Gerald. Cowell

### **A word for Today**

### **"WE WOULD SEE JESUS"**

#### **John 12:21**

God has one Man before Him; the man that has two men before him has one too many. Christianity differs from every other religion in this respect: others have many objects, but Christianity has one Man. "We would see Jesus". We do not want to see the Man in His outward appearance, that is simply the 'outside case'—the Man is inside—the qualities determine the Man. It is a great idea nowadays to get a photograph, then think you have the man. If the eye is keen it may be able to see some of the qualities even in the photograph but it is a far higher thing to get the moral qualities than to be occupied with the 'outside case'. We need to look at some of the moral qualities of the Lord Jesus Christ to see "Him".

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered,



he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). He did not turn round and say to those who were causing Him pain, 'I will do such and such to you', nor did He think it. He committed Himself into the hands of Him who judges righteously. This is a verse with a number of qualities in it.

There is a saying that 'Silence is more eloquent than speech'. Notice that when they mock Him He does not say a single word. He is silent. They challenge His kingship, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself" (Luke 23:37), but not a word escapes His lips. He is perfectly quiet though on the cross. What do you think of that quality? That is one of the traits of Christ.

Think of the circumstances too: "One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him" (Luke 23:39). The Lord is about to bear the judgment of sin. He is perfectly quiet. The Man moves calmly and majestically. He has not a word to say, He is quite silent at the contemptuous way they say, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God" (Luke 23:35). The malefactor goes a step further, he says, "Save thyself and us". The first was possible, the second impossible if He saved Himself. That Man must go this way if others are to be saved from eternal woe. He knew that and He was silent. What think you of such a Man is that? He was nailed to the cross, about to die for man, just about to enter into the judgment of God for sin. Men reviled Him but He was perfectly calm. The Man is moving majestically while the "outside case" is passive.

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). Does it read, 'happy are ye if ye know these things and can sing about them' or 'happy are ye if ye can talk about these qualities'? No, that is not it, but, "happy are ye if ye do them". There is a moral thread of His being worked out: how do I get the power of that thread? Just as I enter into, in measure, what it is to be reviled and be able to turn round and bless, I have that quality of Christ worked into me. Conduct measures progress. We might like the tongue to be the measure of it, but it is not so.

It is a wonderful thing to have one quality of Christ brought before us and to see where we are in relation to it. God measures us by His Son. He had only one Son without spot — suitable in every thing.

In 1 Corinthians we read, “being reviled, we bless” (1 Corinthians 4:12). What a fine picture that is! These are the qualities Christianity generates, qualities which are contrary to all the world’s ways and thoughts: we are in it but not of it. “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you” (Matthew 5:44). Some will say, ‘that is for the Jew’, that is a fine way to get out of it! When it comes to moral qualities we are very slow to say ‘That is for me’. We can never have moral power apart from moral quality. This verse brings us to our knees to say to God, ‘Now enable me to love my enemies: I have not the moral quality to do it, (we cannot have moral quality apart from obedience) enable me to do it!’ We see it in living power in Christ, we see it in measure in the apostles; now on my knees I ask God to enable me to love my enemies.

I am beginning to see more and more that there must be moral quality to have moral power. We cannot have the principles of new creation and the practices of the old creation. The new power never leads me to go on in the old practices. “If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”.

In Romans we read, “we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). Notice that it is not ‘to them that God loves’, but “to them that love God”; those who are in touch with God. This is a world of contrasts. Self is the centre of the world and selfishness the circumference. Here in a world with self for its centre we have to go through it in the spirit of Him who never thought of Himself. The way to get these qualities wrought in us is by way of contrariety. Let us see the importance of having these moral qualities of Christ wrought in us. Now is the time, in this selfish world, to bring this quality of unselfishness out. I can go on knowing that everything that happens to me is to form the moral qualities of Christ in me

so that He may bring them to light in circumstances that are shaky. What are you to do? Shake too? Shake with circumstances? There never was as steady Man on the earth than the Lord Jesus Christ, never a firmer Man on the earth than Jesus of Nazareth. When it was to be the cross, He set His face to go to Jerusalem though He knew every step brought Him nearer to the judgment of God against sin. Christ went steadily on to the judgment.

Am I to shake in circumstances? No! Ephesians 6:10 brings it out; "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might". Not strong in yourself, not in your circumstances, "in the power of his might". That is a steadfast quality. All the shaky circumstances will work real dependence in my soul. If men and women are changing all around me, never mind, they did every day around Christ. Paul is an example for us, he said, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me" (2 Timothy 4:16). He went right on. If you and I go right on we will find out the very circumstances we are caused to pass through are all needed to work in our spirit the qualities of Jesus. So we can thank God for everything that comes, and for everything that goes, if as a result we are able to stand. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might". If we lack that quality all the bolstering up of the world will not help us. What is wanted is that spirit that will not revile, that commits everything to God who judgeth righteously. Leave it there and ask no explanation from God but push on.

You and I will never get on unless we go in for what is impossible to man. Unless we have divine power and divine truth we shall never get on. We want more of the Almighty power of God resting upon us. If we do not go on with the consciousness that these moral qualities are being wrought in us by everything that happens, we shall just fritter away our time.

If we see this we shall not ask to have our circumstances altered, but we shall ask to have ourselves altered! We shall ask the

Lord to go on changing us and let it be a continual thirsting of spirit to be more conformed to Jesus. There is a Man who possesses all the moral qualities that God delights in. He is more than a Man, He is the Son of God. Nothing will enable us to know this like trying to follow in His steps. Let us apply ourselves to get the principles and find out all the moral qualities that God delights in. God wants us to be a moral transcript of His Son; we cannot be like Him except morally now.

It has struck me much that God has kept back His physical likeness; no one can tell us His height, His weight, His appearance; the physical 'outside case' has been kept back and His moral qualities have been brought out. If it had been otherwise there would have been a sort of idol worship. May God enable us to go in for these great moral qualities that shine in our Lord Jesus Christ

John Macdonald (1840 – 1926)

An Address 26th January 1891 (Note: All the Scripture quotations in this article are from the AV.)