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## ***Living Water***

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*An address at Defford, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011)*

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## Recent Ministry

### THE PATTERN

I would like to speak about patterns:

- First of all what was seen in perfection in Jesus,
- then the pattern of the tabernacle shown to Moses,
- then a bad pattern that King Ahaz prepared,
- next of the pattern shown to Ezekiel and
- finally the pattern to be seen in an individual Christian.

When I was younger I worked in a large engineering works that had a pattern shop, a very important place because from the patterns they made metal castings. If the pattern was right the casting would be right. If the pattern was wrong the castings would be wrong. Pattern making was so important that the pattern makers were paid better than most of the other workers.

#### **Jesus – the perfect Pattern**

**“...for Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you a model that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering, threatened not but gave himself over into the hands of him who judges righteously; who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, in order that, being dead to sins we may live to righteousness...” (1Peter 2:21-24)**

It is important for us Christians to have a right pattern, a right example now. God has no other standard for man except Jesus and He is a perfect pattern. God is going to see to it that finally every believer is conformed to the image of God’s Son (Romans 8:29). We will be conformed physically as well as morally. As we become older we feel weaknesses in our bodies but eventually we will have bodies of glory like to the Lord’s own body of glory. There is also to be moral conformity to Christ. The Spirit of God is seeking to bring about moral conformity to Christ now. The apostle Peter writes beautifully that Jesus has left us a model that we

should follow in His steps. He also refers to the fact that Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree.

**Our supreme  
example is  
Jesus**

There are three references to sin in the short passage that we read. He *“bore our sins in his body”*, *“being dead to sins”* and Jesus as the One *“who did no sin”*. As sinners we do not need a model. We need a Saviour, One who can take away our sins to deliver us from an eternity of misery, someone who can change our lives. The Lord Jesus Christ is a wonderful Saviour, available to everyone, to you, to me, available to the worst people in society today. He is able to save us completely, to save us from our sins and save us for glory. Once we are redeemed we then need a person to follow. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Saviour but He is the pattern.

In the gospels we read of a man called Bartimaeus (see Mark 10:46). He was blind— as we all are, blind as to God until God sovereignly opens our eyes. Bartimaeus had his eyes opened by Jesus when he asked Jesus for mercy. Once he was able to see, what did he do? He followed Jesus in the way (see Mark 10:52). We too need mercy. But then we need someone to follow and the Lord Jesus Christ is our wonderful example. Paul says, *“Be my imitators, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1)*.

Some of us who are older can remember people who were models for the flock of God - people that we respected because of their godly lives. That is a right thing to do. It is not right to slavishly follow anybody but it is right to respect and take account of what is of God in one and another.

Our supreme example is Jesus *“who did no sin”*. God intends, through the gospel, to change lives so that instead of living sinful lives we live upright lives. How can we do that? It is only by the help of the Holy Spirit. Thank God, through repentance and faith we not only obtain forgiveness of our sins but we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This Divine Person can enable every believer to overcome the sinful tendencies that are in all our hearts.

And so it says that Jesus did no sin. Scripture adds *“neither was guile found in his mouth”*. He did not twist things. He did not deceive people, He spoke straightforwardly. One of the important things today is that Christians live straightforward, upright lives. The gospel changes people who lived crooked lives, devious, deceitful lives, to live like Jesus.

Peter writes of Him particularly in relation to suffering. God never promised that life as a Christian would be easy. We have a great Priest on high who experienced the trials of earth and who now lives to intercede for us and to provide practical grace to meet every situation that might arise (see Hebrews 7:25-26; 4:14-16). It is not easy to be reviled yet not retort. It is not easy to suffer without threatening revenge. People respond in different ways. Some, if reviled, shout abuse in return. Other people bottle up things inside them and look for an opportunity for revenge. Jesus was never like that. He *“when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering, threatened not; but gave himself over into the hands of him who judges righteously”*. Our model is the Lord Jesus Christ who was here on earth and displayed in all circumstances what God ever looked for in man. He is our great pattern.

## **The Tabernacle**

**“And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the utensils thereof, even so shall ye make it” (Exodus 25:8-9).**

**“And see that thou make them according to their pattern, which hath been shown to thee on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40).**

I now want to speak about the pattern of the tabernacle that was given to Moses. I would encourage us all and especially the younger believers here today to learn about the tabernacle. The typical teaching of the materials and construction of the tabernacle has helped me to understand Christianity. There are a number of books written that can help us about the types in the Bible. When I was young I derived instruction from reading C.A. Coates' Outline of Exodus in relation to the tabernacle.

The epistle to the Hebrews refers to the *“true tabernacle which the Lord has pitched and not man”* (Hebrews 8:2). At Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down to indwell the assembly the Lord Jesus pitched the true tabernacle. God then had a dwelling place here after our Lord had ascended to heaven. Christianity is not a man-made invention. It was not invented by Paul or Peter or any of the apostles. It came from heaven. It came from Jesus. He pitched the true tabernacle.

But in the Old Testament we read about the earthly tabernacle. Moses did not receive the pattern of the tabernacle when the Israelites were in Egypt. What they needed in the bondage of Egypt was deliverance – they were slaves in Egypt. God promised to come down to deliver them (see Exodus 3:8), and He did deliver them. He delivered them initially from the destroying angel by the lamb’s blood being put on their door posts and their lintels so that they escaped the judgment of God (see Exodus 12:21-23). Then, when they were pursued by the Egyptians God opened up the way of escape through the Red Sea and they sang about God’s deliverance (see Exodus 14:19-31 & 15:1-21).

What a tremendous deliverance has been secured by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who died on the cross to deliver us from the power of Satan. He annulled him who had the might of death, that is, the devil, in order that He might set us free for ever (see Hebrews 2:14-15). The epistle then refers to serving God with reverence and fear. (Hebrews 12:28)

Moses’ song refers to being guided by God’s strength unto the abode of God’s holiness (Exodus 15:13). God freed His people from slavery in Egypt to provide Him with a dwelling place. After the Israelites had been three months in the wilderness, Moses went up Mount Sinai and God gave him the pattern of this dwelling place, the tabernacle. From Exodus chapter 25 onwards, you will find several references to the “pattern” shown to Moses on the mountain. God instructed Moses to be very particular that he and the children of Israel did not deviate from what was shown in the pattern on the mountain when building the tabernacle. Later when

the Israelites built the tabernacle there are around 15 references in Exodus 39 and 40 to the work being done *“As Jehovah had commanded Moses”*. Every single detail was to be done according to God’s pattern. When they had built the tabernacle according to this pattern God demonstrated His approval when His glory filled it. There was blessing for them when they did things according to God’s instructions.

Later the Israelites moved into the land of promise and God raised up King David who desired to build a more settled dwelling place for God. The tabernacle was a movable construction but David wanted to build a temple, a permanent place for God (see Psalm 132). God did not permit him to build the temple but David gave to his son Solomon by the Spirit the pattern for its construction (1 Chronicles 28:12). Again the structure of the temple, its materials and its contents, were not David’s ideas, but he received it in detail from the Spirit of God. Solomon later constructed that temple according to the pattern and God again demonstrated His approval when the cloud of glory came and filled it (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

There is no scope for the mind of man in the things of God. Let us remember that. What we have contained in the scriptures and particularly now for us in the New Testament, in the epistles, came from heaven, came from God. It is not man’s invention. It is not man’s idea and we should adhere to this good teaching.

### **Ahaz and a bad pattern**

**“And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and he saw the altar that was at Damascus, and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the form of the altar and the pattern of it...And the brazen altar which was before Jehovah, [king Ahaz] brought forward from the forefront of the house...” (2 Kings 16:10 & 14)**

Alas, the Israelites turned away from God. Many of their kings turned away from God including king Ahaz. In those days a king had tremendous influence. Ahaz was lawless himself and he made the people lawless (2 Chronicles 28:19).



**Our altar is Christ and His death is the means of approach to God.**

In the passage we read, there were two kings opposing him and he sought the help of the Assyrians, an important military power. Then when he visited Damascus he saw there an

impressive altar that was very different from the altar the Israelites had in Jerusalem. The size and shape of the altar at Jerusalem had been built according to the pattern that David had given to Solomon, according to God's pattern.

But when lawless Ahaz went to Damascus he saw a pagan altar that he admired and he sent its pattern to his high priest who constructed a new altar. Ahaz then displaced the altar that had been made in the times of Solomon with his new altar. Ahaz retained Solomon's altar for himself but it was displaced by this altar that he introduced.

Offerings to God continued: burnt offerings, sacrifices and the morning oblation, the evening oblation, daily offerings that God had prescribed continued but offered on this wrong altar, not in accordance with God's pattern. These acts constituted sin in the holy things of God. It was a sad day in the history of God's people when that took place. The true altar was displaced.

We Christians have an altar. Hebrews tells us, "*We have an altar*" (Hebrews 13:10). Our altar is Christ and His death is the means of approach to God. There is no other approach acceptable to God. We should recognise that there is much introduced in the history of Christianity, in Christian service and worship that is not according to God and has displaced God's ordered way. Every recovery movement that has taken place has sought to get back to what is according to God.

Many people today are claiming that there is not much difference between religions, that Muslims, Hindus are all just following different ways to God. It is not true: there is one altar. "*We have an altar*". Our approach to God is through one Man, Jesus Christ, and through His death. Without His death we would have no access

to God. By the blood of Jesus we have the new and living way to God (Hebrews 10:20).

Ahaz carried out other wrong acts. He took the laver, *“cut off the panels of the bases, and removed the lavers from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a stone pavement”*. Both the molten sea and the ten lavers had an important function for cleansing persons and sacrifices within the temple but Ahaz downgraded these facilities. Perhaps he used the brass from the bases to make his new altar. There is a tremendous downgrading within Christianity today. The authority of the Holy Scriptures – ‘sola scriptura’, by the scriptures only, that was one of the great features of the Reformation — has been replaced by all kind of un-Biblical ideas in many places of worship. I am not saying that it happens everywhere. Many genuine Christians deplore features that are coming in amongst Christians that are not according to God.

When man’s ideas are introduced sacred things are made common. Believers need to return to Jesus as the One Mediator, to return to the Bible as the divinely inspired word of God and check everything from the scriptures. I believe there is a danger for us, everyone of us here today, of absorbing ideas and practices that are not according to God and thus leavening the gatherings of God’s people. I am not saying, ‘do not learn from others’. Of course we can learn from others, we can learn from any one. But let us make sure we verify the accuracy and the rightness of everything from the Holy Scriptures. We have to watch that we adhere to God’s word and avoid introducing spurious things among God’s people.

Remarkably in the time of Ahaz God was still speaking. God spoke through Isaiah the prophet. God said some wonderful things through Isaiah to Ahaz. He had the opportunity to do things right but he refused God’s invitation. (Isaiah 7)

God does speak, He is still speaking today. He can speak through all kinds of people. *“God speaketh once, and twice, —and man perceiveth it not” (Job 33:14).*

## Ezekiel's pattern

**“Thou, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded at their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they be confounded at all they have done, make known to them the form of the house and its fashion, and its goings out, and its comings in, and all its forms, and all its statutes, yea all the forms thereof and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof and all the statutes thereof and do them” (Ezekiel 43:10-11)**

There were recoveries to God under Hezekiah and Josiah but eventually the children of Israel turned away from God and were carried into captivity. Ezekiel prophesied in that time. He sat among the captives and God spoke to him. Whatever man has done, whatever the sad fruits of man's activities, God has not stopped speaking. He still speaks today. In Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 the Lord says to each of the seven assemblies, *“He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies”*. I know that we require to be overcomers so that we do have an ear to hear - but God has not ceased speaking.

Ezekiel has many things to say to the children of Israel as seen from Chapters 1-39. And then he receives a vision from God about a new temple as described from chapter 40 onwards. He is told to describe that new house to the house of Israel *“that they may be confounded at their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern”*. One of the great blessings of today is that we have the Holy Scriptures to correct us and instruct us.

Paul writes his second letter to Timothy when so many were turning away. He tells Timothy to abide in the things that he had learnt, what he had learned from Paul, which for us would be the New Testament and he tells him that from a child he had known the sacred letters which no doubt would have been the Old Testament. He tells him to abide in these things (2 Timothy 3:14, 15). And thank God that we still have these precious scriptures today.

It says here, *“let them measure the pattern”*. We each should do

that in our Bible readings and studies. I used to be told that people who worked in a bank had first to learn about the good bank notes so that they then could detect what was counterfeit. It is important not to be over occupied with the evil, not be talking only about what is bad. Let us learn what is good, what is according to the mind of God, what is contained in the Holy Scriptures. Then we have a standard by which to judge all things.

**Every one of the 66  
Books of the Bible is  
divinely inspired.**

And so it says, *“show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded at their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern”*. Then *“if they be confounded at all that they have done”* they would learn more of God’s holy things. That is the way God works. If we learn things from God and we adjust our way of life, our conduct, to be in accordance with God’s word, He will teach us more things. He loves to bless people who accept His rebuke and seek to do what pleases Him.

And so it says, *“And if they be confounded at all that they have done, make known to them the form of the house, and its fashion, and its goings out, and its comings in, and all its forms, and all its statutes, yea, all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the statutes thereof, and do them”*. I think that is what has happened in times of recovery. When there has been genuineness, the desire to please God, to put right what is wrong, then He tells how He would be served in a way that is pleasing to Him.

And then he says here, *“This is the law of the house: Upon the top of the mountain all its border round about is most holy”*. I would say this: let us make sure we regard the Bible as *“most holy”*. It is not just any book of ancient writings. Every one of the 66 Books of the Bible is divinely inspired. The Lord Jesus is the Word of God. But the Bible is the written word of God and we should treat its teachings with respect, seek to put them into practice and hold them as the authority to test everything else said or written.

## Individual pattern

**“...in all things affording thyself as a pattern of good works; in teaching uncorruptedness, gravity, a sound word, not to be condemned; that he who is opposed may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say about us...” (Titus 2:7-8).**

Finally, I would like to refer to what Paul said to Titus, one of his sons in the faith. The epistle was written by Paul when Titus was in Crete. Cretans then had a terrible reputation. Even their own poets spoke against the lives of Cretans. Crete then was like the modern society in which we live where people have turned away from God and even from natural things that are of God. That is the sad state of society in which we live. We might as well face it. We live in very difficult times, not only turning away from God in doctrine but in many things that affect family life and practical righteousness.

There is great emphasis in Paul’s letter to Titus on conduct, Christian conduct, that will commend the gospel. There is no point in talking about the gospel, talking about Jesus, if it is not backed up by practical examples in our own lives. Paul really says to Titus, ‘You are here as a representative of God’. I would say to every one of us here, whether young or old, as Christians we are here as representatives of God, to be salt and light in this world.

We are not all of the same stature; some of us are further on in the Christian road than others, but we are all here as representatives of God. How are we going to behave? So he says to Titus, *“in all things affording thyself as a pattern of good works”*. Well, it is a great thing to have a model. I go back to what I said at the beginning. If you have the pattern right other right things follow. It is a great thing to be able to see in the lives of people a pattern of what Christianity should be like.

Paul refers to several practical things: he mentions his teaching, *“in teaching uncorruptedness”*. Do not water down the word, do not corrupt it. If you are a preacher, if you are speaking to anyone about God, do not deviate from what is according to the word of God. And so it says, *“in teaching uncorruptedness”*.

And then it says, *“gravity”*. In other words, there ought to be soberness about the Christian. I do not mean he cannot laugh or cannot smile but there should be sobriety as having to do with the sacred things of God.

And then it says, *“a sound word”*. I think that includes what we might say in an informal way to one another or to our fellow men. A sound word: it is one thing to say good things, perhaps when you are on a platform or when you are speaking formally on behalf of God. It is another thing to say sound words in general conversation.

And so it says, *“a sound word, not to be condemned; that he who is opposed may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say about us”*. Many people today have turned away from Christianity, many people today are anti-God. Yet they should be able to see in our lives evidences of peace and joy as well as uprightness, the features of the kingdom of God, so that people are compelled to say, ‘There is in him or her something different from the way of life in the world’.

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May the Lord help us to keep our eye on Jesus. May we be helped to regard Him as our pattern. May we recognise that He has left us a model that we should follow in His steps.

May we take account of what is according to God as set up from the beginning; how things were rightly set up in doctrine and practice in the time of the apostles. Let us pay attention to what Paul wrote about Christianity and Christian conduct. Let each one of us desire to become a pattern for others to view while we await the return of the Lord Jesus. May the Lord help us all, for His name’s sake.

Ken Hollands

*An address at Defford, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011*

## APPROACHING THE THRONE AND SENT OUT FROM THE THRONE

### APPROACHING THE THRONE

**"Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we have not a high priest not able to sympathise with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart. Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace for seasonable help" Hebrews 4:14-16**

In Hebrews chapter 4 there is a throne of grace. *"Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession... Let us approach therefore with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for seasonable help."* There in glory my precious Saviour has been made *"both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). The hymn writer says:

*On His Father's throne is seated,  
Christ the Lord, the Living One*

That throne is a throne of grace, and we approach it to receive seasonable help.

Do not limit this to the prayer meeting. Support the prayer meeting of course. The prayer meeting is the power house. That is where we get this seasonable help, particularly so. But the throne of grace is always there. So that when you get in a fix, not knowing what to do or how to do it, you can resort in spirit to the throne of grace for *seasonable* help. Whenever we need help, there it is – the throne of grace.

**The throne of grace  
is always there.**

We have *"a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God"*. He is on the throne. *"Behold the heavens, and the heaven*

*of heavens cannot contain thee*” says Solomon (1 Kings 8:27). Here is a blessed Man who has passed right through all the heavens. He is there in all His glory and He is there on your behalf. And there is not one experience through which you pass, through which He Himself has not already passed – sin apart. He is able to sympathise because He was made perfect through suffering. What does that mean? It means that He came in by a way that He had never been before. In that way He became perfect through suffering. This great high priest!

## SENT OUT FROM THE THRONE

**“In the year of the death of king Uzziah, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Seraphim were standing above him: each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he flew. And one called to the other and said, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Isaiah 6:1-3**

I read from Isaiah 6, where we get a sight of the throne in view of service. I fully realise that the service to which Isaiah was called was not a very happy one. *“In the year of the death of king Uzziah, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.”* It speaks of every other order of man gone, and gone for ever and Christ alone the supreme and blessed object of every heart. What a sight to see Him there. He is calling you into His testimony, maybe for the first time. Maybe there is someone here who is not fully committed to Him, who has not confessed His precious name. The Spirit of God would challenge all our hearts.

Let us take account of this amazing sight, *“I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple”*. I have never quite understood that reference, save as I like to relate it back to the words of the hymn:-

*Thousand, thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of His train.  
Hallelujah!*



*Jesus comes, and comes to reign.*

What a full result is going to be secured, and you and I are going to be with Him. Young people, do you love the Lord? Thank God if you do. You are going to be with Him in the day when He is high and lifted up and His train will fill the temple, and you will see it. You are going to be part of the royal train. *“His train filled the temple”*. Seraphim, custodians of the divine attributes, were there. Each had six wings – *“With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he flew. And one called to the other and said, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!”* That is very wonderful.

There are tremendous efforts being made these days in many parts of the world, to secure souls for Christ. I hope that we are praying for them. Tremendous efforts were made recently in Tokyo which resulted in thousands being secured for Christ. I hope we are giving thanks for that. And so we may go on; there are those who are evangelically laying down their lives for the truth and the gospel. May they be honoured and their work be wondrously blessed.

It all leads up to the day when the *“whole earth is full of his glory!”* What a day that will be! They will not then say, *“Know the Lord”*, because everyone will know Him, old and young happily going on together, *“from the little one among them to the great among them”* (Hebrews 8:11). How glorious the day that is soon to come in this very world. As far as I can see, everything will be put right in a very short space of time. Everything that is so terribly wrong will all be put right by the Saviour who is coming to reign supreme. And the scandal of Calvary will there and then be publicly reversed. He will be crowned Lord of all on earth, He has been crowned in heaven. What a Saviour, what a wonderful Saviour. I hope everybody here loves Him! I hope that every heart has yielded to Him. If not, take advantage of the atmosphere in this hall, and yield your heart to Christ now.

**Will you say, “*Here am I; send me*”?**

So it says, “*And one called to the other and said, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory!*” What about Him

now? Are you full of His glory? Can you behold this amazing sight even from the standpoint of just the few words I have read from Isaiah chapter six? In mighty power He is going to reign supreme for one thousand years. And we shall see that reign; we shall see it from the grandstand of our place with Christ in glory. We will have part in the church, and there will be diffused through the church the light that shines throughout the millennial earth. What a day it will be!

Now there is something to be done; Isaiah is going to receive a commission. A commission he does not particularly like, but that is not the point. Are you going to receive a commission tonight? Are you going to lift up the banner? Are you going to receive a commission that causes you to surrender your life, your all, as Isaiah says here: “*And one of the seraphim flew unto me, and he had in his hand a glowing coal, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and he made it touch my mouth, and said, Behold, this has touched thy lips; thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin expiated. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? And I said, Here am I; send me.*” (vv 6&7)

Who is going to be sent from this hall in Musselburgh tonight? Who is the Spirit of God going to send? Will you say, “*Here am I; send me*”? You have given your heart to Christ; have you given your life to Him? Have you surrendered your all to Him in the light of the day of coming glory? The Spirit of God might be making a challenge to some heart here. May the language of your committal to my Saviour tonight be, “*Here am I; send me*”.

Ron Gregory

*(Extracts from an address at Musselburgh, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1994)*

*This article was selected for reprinting from “Living Water”  
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## Poetry Selection

### SOMETIMES

**(Some) overcame kingdoms...stopped lions' mouths, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword...others were tortured...were stoned, were sawn asunder...died by the death of the sword" (Hebrews 11:33-37)**

*Sometimes the lions' mouths are shut;  
Sometimes God bids us fight or fly;  
Sometimes He feeds us by the brook,  
Sometimes the flowing stream runs dry.*

*Sometimes the burning flames are quenched,  
Sometimes with sevenfold heat they glow;  
Sometimes His hand divides the waves,  
Sometimes His billows overflow.*

*Sometimes He turns the sword aside,  
Sometimes He lets the sharp blade bite;  
Sometimes our foes are at our heels,  
Sometimes He hides us from their sight.*

*We may not choose, nor would we dare,  
The path in which our feet shall tread;  
Enough that He that path hath made,  
And He Himself shall walk ahead.*

*The danger that His love allows  
Is safer than our fears may know;  
The peril that His care permits  
Is our defence where'er we go.*

*Annie Johnson Flint (1857-1932)*

## BE YE ALSO READY

*'What are the signs of Thy coming,  
And when shall the end time be?'  
Anxious, they questioned the Master,  
Curious, even as we.*

*Are these the signs of His coming  
That loom over sea and land,  
That darken the earth and the heavens?  
Is the day so near at hand?*

*We know not; He has not told us  
This secret of the Lord,  
But all we need He hath left us  
To read in His holy word.*

*And pulsing through the silence  
Like the far, faint throb of a drum;  
'Watch, be ye also ready,  
For ye know not when I come.'*

*Sweet as a silver trumpet  
Through tumult and clamour clear;  
'Watch, be ye also ready,  
For the time is drawing near.'*

*Annie Johnson Flint (1857-1932)*

## Testimony Section

### TAKING A STAND FOR JESUS

I was born into a Muslim family and had five brothers and four sisters. I was brought up to believe that it was my duty to fight for Islam and to prove to any Christians that I met that they were wrong. I had a fairly good knowledge of English and therefore my family and friends were always urging me to stand up for Islam. That is what happened until I started thinking for myself. I began to wonder why it was that if Allah was omnipotent we had to look to Mecca when we prayed, otherwise he would not answer, and why we could only pray using particular words and phrases.

My brother who was living in the UK became Christian. My father wanted me to go to the UK to finish my education, so I came to live with my brother and started to meet his Christian friends. My first reaction was to prove them wrong. I was appalled to think that Jesus was the Son of God — no Muslim can accept that. I wanted to prove to these people that the Bible is corrupted. I had been taught that the Jews corrupted the Old Testament and the Christians the New Testament. Christians told me the Bible was the “word of God”. This was a puzzle. Did they really mean that God talked to them? I had to resist this but when I was alone I was saying to God, ‘God, I see something I want in these people, but if these Christians are wrong, why do I feel that way and if they are right, why am I not like them?’ The seed of doubt was already sown but I was not ready to become a Christian. When Christians quoted the Bible and spoke about Jesus, I went to the Koran. As I compared the Koran and the Bible a deep struggle began in me. The struggle got harder and harder, I felt torn inside. I went to senior Muslims looking to stop the struggle but they did not have any answer that would meet the thirsty spirit that I had. So I began to pray. One night when I was weary with the inward struggle I said, ‘God, show me if You are the God of Mohammed or if You are the Father of the Messiah — Jesus. Jesus, help me, I am so tired, if You are God, let me see You’. After that, I slept and the next day I was more ready and willing to hear about Christ. I felt at peace. I began to ask more questions of the Christians that I met. God started sending Christian tracts into my life. Anywhere I went, I found or was given a tract and I read it. It was God following me everywhere I was going. The turning point was seeing the love and joy that was evident

among Christians. This came from their link with the Lord Jesus. They told me that God loved me and that I could come to Him through his Son. I surrendered my heart and life to Jesus and found peace with God. Now even in the darkest moments of my life there is hope, there is a little light there for Jesus is with me.

After I became a Christian I wondered whether to keep my faith a secret but the change that had come about in my life could not be hid. As a Muslim, I had always taken a stand for what I believed in. I had been in political organisations fighting for my rights as loudly as I could. Now I had to take a stand for Christ!

I wanted to talk to my own people for many Muslims are going through the struggle that I went through. Many are looking for the truth about God. Many feel lonely and empty. My friends, Jesus is the answer. You want to have the peace that I am talking about? You want to have the joy? Ask God to forgive you. You see, we are living in a way that is not pleasing to God. Kneel down and say, 'God help me and cleanse me'. We can never get clean of our bad deeds by ourselves or through our own efforts. We can never do that, but Jesus can cleanse us. He died on the cross for you and me so that we might be cleansed and forgiven. He died for all the people who are willing to cry out to Him for His help and forgiveness.

Will you ask Him to forgive you? Ask Him to lead you, ask Him to show you the way. Kneel down, pray and ask Him to come and help you and He will be the answer.

Nomie

*I would like to thank Philip Robinson for providing this testimony Ed.*

## **A Voice from the Past**

### **HUMILITY**

In Christ we see everything in divine perfection, but the gospels show Christ as One that is meek and lowly in heart; as the most perfect and excellent instance of humility that ever existed; as One in whom the greatest actions and expressions of humility were manifest. Though *"being in the form of God"* He *"made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant"* and *"humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross"* (Philippians 2:6-8).

Now the gospel leads us to love Christ as such a humble Person and as a humble Saviour and Lord. If our Lord and Master is humble, certainly it becomes us, who are His disciples and servants to be humble also, for *“the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord”* (Matthew 10:23-24)

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

## **A word for Today**

### **PETER, PHILIP, AND PAUL AND THEIR FIRST RECORDED PREACHINGS**

#### **Introduction**

It is on my mind to call attention to the need of activity in service and testimony for Christ. No one has more moral title to address us in this respect than the apostle Paul. His service for Christ was unremitting; he says that he, *“laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”* (1 Corinthians 15:10)); and as having finished his course he addresses Timothy, whom we may regard as a representative servant now, and he charges him before God and before the Lord Jesus Christ, who is about to judge the quick and the dead, to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season, and furthermore to watch in all things to do the work of an evangelist, and to make full proof of his ministry (see 2Timothy 4:1 – 5).

The need of service was urgent, and it is still urgent, and as the word came to Timothy so it comes to us. The Lord would lay it upon us that the need is great, and I want to show from the Scriptures in the Acts, just what it is that is to be preached. If we see that the preaching is to go on, it is obvious that we should know what the preaching is.

The scriptures read bring before us three preachers of the gospel in their first recorded gospel addresses. Peter, Philip and Paul are the leading vessels used of God, as recorded in the Acts, in the commencement of the gospel. Each of these three great servants represents a specific aspect of the gospel in his first announcement of it.

## Peter's Preaching — Acts 2

**“But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them, Men of Judaea, and all ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words” (v14)**

**“This Jesus has God raised up, whereof all we are witnesses. Having therefore been exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which ye behold and hear. For David has not ascended into the heavens, but he says himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I have put thine enemies to be the footstool of thy feet. Let the whole house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God has made him, this Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (vv 32-36).**

Now, first of all from Acts 2, I want to show that the preaching is light as to the wealth of heaven that is available to us. The chapter sets before us what I may call ‘administrative preaching’. It is said that Peter stood up with the eleven, meaning that there were twelve – one was about to speak, and the others were standing by.

I want for a moment to enlarge upon this feature of the preaching, because one is conscious in oneself, and in what one sees that in the preaching there is often a great sense of poverty; whereas the twelve represented an administration of infinite wealth. It was not a mere sermon of doctrine that Peter preached. When I speak of administration, it is not a matter of administering laws; what is referred to is the wealth of heaven.

Peter is dealing in his address with what was present and obvious to everyone there; the Holy Spirit had come down, and He had come upon the disciples and had filled them. He came in as the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and that sound filled the house, and so we read that those in Jerusalem said, *“We hear them speaking...the great things of God” (v.11).*

Peter stands up with the eleven, and now it is not exactly just speaking, as everyone can speak- but not everyone can preach. It does not require gift to speak; but it requires gift to preach, and gift is available. If God has been pleased to give us the Holy Spirit – the greatest possible gift – do you not think that He would give us sufficient gift or ability to speak of Him, and to speak of Christ rightly? The speaking by the disciples in this passage does not bring about conviction, but the preaching of Peter did! *“The people said, Men and brethren, what*



*shall we do?" (v.37). There is that power given of God by which the truth is enforced so as to carry conviction. It is wonderful that gift is available; and we are exhorted to "desire earnestly the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31).*

**The Holy Spirit was present, poured out from heaven**

When Peter stood up with the eleven, what you find in the 'administrative preaching' is that the Scriptures are opened up with spiritual intelligence so as to enforce what is immediately on hand. The Holy Spirit was present, poured out from heaven, representing the wealth of heaven; but in order to bring out the truth relative to the Spirit, Peter quotes Joel, and to establish the truth of the resurrection and ascension of Christ he cites David. We have therefore the prophets and the psalms linked together by spiritual intelligence so as to establish on the one hand that God would pour out the Spirit, and on the other that Christ should rise from the dead and sit at God's right hand in heaven.

So we see how Peter – the first preacher in our dispensation – by the Spirit links up Scripture and sets out in the clearest possible manner Christ risen and exalted and the Holy Spirit on earth. *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear... therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ (v.33 & 36).* I do not know of anything more important than to make it known that, consequent on a risen and exalted Christ, the Holy Spirit is available for man. I never feel tired of emphasising the great gift that is proposed administratively – the gift of the Spirit. He is here, He is shed forth once for all and He remains here.

## **Philip's Preaching — Acts 8**

**"...And on that day there arose a great persecution against the assembly which was in Jerusalem and all were scattered into the countries of Judea and Samaria except the apostles...Those then that had been scattered went through the countries announcing the glad tidings of the word. And Philip, going down to a city of Samaria, preached the Christ to them; and the crowds with one accord gave heed to the things spoken by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he wrought. For from many who had unclean spirits, they went out,**

**crying with a loud voice; and many that were paralysed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (vv 1 & 4-8).**

Now, I want to go on to Philip. He is the second preacher, and what we observe is that he is not primarily commissioned, and yet he preached in a most effective way, being one of those who were scattered, and what I may remark is that the Spirit of God always acts in accord with the governmental ways of God. We are labouring at a great disadvantage unless we take into account that the government of God is favourable to the testimony, so that the very scattering here furthered the spread of the Gospel. It is not now to set out the position, not to call attention to the Spirit exactly; it is to show that God has a Man who can do everything.

What an immense thing it is to stand up with the knowledge of Christ in my soul and know that I am presenting a Man who can do everything. That is the idea of a commissioned preacher; for although nothing is said of this in his case, Philip was undoubtedly serving under the Lord’s direction; later he was sent by the Spirit to the eunuch. Every military man knows what a commission is. A commission represents authority. The preacher stands up as commissioned; he is consciously representative of Christ, and he knows that he is presenting One who can do everything.

There are no miracles recorded in Acts 2, Peter makes no reference to them, nor does he perform any; the point was to call attention to the greatness of the position. When we come to the preaching of Christ we have miracles wrought, and so as Philip preaches, he performs works of power. There was the evidence there of the Christ — the Christ risen from the dead; He can cast out demons, He can relieve souls, He can meet any condition of soul; hence it says, *“there was great joy in that city”*.

You may say that there are no miracles performed today. I am not so sure; there certainly are works of power at the present time. There is not one present here who loves Christ who is not the subject of the work of Christ. Philip had the evidence by him in the performing of miracles of the power of Christ.

In the next evangelical work of Philip we have not the preaching of Christ, but the preaching of Jesus — a preaching that must touch every heart. I am going over the great features of the subject matter of the preaching and incidentally calling attention to the importance of being in accord with those features if we are to be preachers. So Philip

## **I preach a Man who has won my heart**

preached Jesus. If I preach Jesus, I preach a Man who has won my heart *“When we shall see him”*, unbeliever says, *“there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isaiah 53:2)*.

How important it is that Jesus should be known personally and a knowledge of Him in this light means that I am no respecter of persons; I recognise that He is head of every man and I appropriate Him in relation to every man: *“A light”*, says Simeon, *“to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel” (Luke 2:32)*. What a position; to stand up with Jesus, as it were, appropriated in my soul to the whole race of men, for that is what the preaching of Philip involved.

Hence we have an African man here, for if I have Jesus in my soul, I see that Jesus is as much head of the African or the Asiatic as He is of the European – He is head of every man. It is a wonderful thing to appropriate Christ in relation to the whole race, and that is what the preaching of Jesus entails. So Philip does not say anything to the eunuch about the apostles at Jerusalem. Possibly we should have said how advantageous it would be to go back there and get some help from the apostles at Jerusalem. Not so! We are now occupied with Jesus – with the Man. You may say, ‘What became of the eunuch? Jesus had His eye on him; the influence of Jesus flows out to Africa as it did to Palestine; knowing Jesus, I know that he was taken care of; Jesus would stand by His convert; He would maintain him rejoicing.

What He is ministering now is for the whole race of men, for *“there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.” (1 Timothy 2:5)*. We may say assuredly that the testimony that has reached us is universal in its bearing; it is for all, we may be sure of that. It is as seeing Him in relation to the whole race, as Simeon did, that I can preach Jesus. Philip went down into the water with the eunuch; he did not stand on the bank and look at him going down into death in figure; he was with him – they were in the water together. How becoming in the light of Jesus!

### **Paul’s Preaching — Acts 9**

**“And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus that he is the Son of God” (v.20).**

In conclusion, just one word more and that is the preaching of the Son

of God. Paul is the third great preacher in the Acts. Peter, we may say, preached the Lord; that is he emphasised the administration – the wealth of heaven; Philip preached the Christ, and Jesus; and Paul preached the Son of God. It is not now simply a question of meeting the need in souls, but of apprehending the One who can establish another world - a world for God. The Son of God is on God's side, and He establishes an order of things for God. Is that not an important feature of the preaching? How shall we take our converts out of the world save as we point out another world for them?

The Son of God introduces another sphere of things – a world for God; so Paul says elsewhere, *“When it pleased God...to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to those which were apostles before me” (Galatians 1:16-17)*. So the Son of God is connected with heaven, bringing in an order of things for God, so that he says again, *“For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us... was not in yea and nay, but in him was the yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:19-20)*. The preaching of the Son of God brings in an order of things for the glory of God, and that takes you entirely out of the world.

## **An Appeal**

Now, having said that much, I go back again to the appeal. I believe that Lord is expecting much at the present time. To whom much is given, of the same much is required, and much has been given. We have much, and the principle of Scripture is, *“Such as I have give I to thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6)*. That is the principle; that is to say, we share with men by testimony what we have got. It is for men, not simply for us; what we have is to be shared with men. The principle of Christianity is giving: *“If thou knewest”*, says the Lord, *“the gift of God” (John 4:10)*. If we have something we are to share it with others and that is by testimony, by preaching and by speaking of it. I feel it laid upon me to make this appeal, for the thing is urgent. We should face things and seek to share with our fellow-men that which God has so bountifully administered to us through Christ.

James Taylor

*Extracted from an address in 1925*