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Living Water

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Recent Ministry

REVIVAL

1 Samuel 1:9-11

Acts 16:13-18, 25

Philippians 4:4-7

I desire to speak about 'revival' and to encourage us to 'lift up our heads', for we believe in a God who is *"able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think"* (Ephesians 3:20), a God who is ready to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing (see Malachi 3:10).

I recall the comment made by Jeremiah, *"How is the gold become dim!"* (Lamentations 4:1). Gold speaks of what is 'of God' but in that day its brightness had become dim and so it is today. This used to be a Christian country and there used to be a fear of God. This was a land of martyrs, who died rather than deny their faith... this was a land from which missionaries went overseas, people who did great things for God and spread the gospel over vast areas of the world.

We read in the word about God's house, *"how do ye see it now"* (Haggai 2:3). How do we see our nation? Do we care? The word of God is despised today. It is set aside, both in government and even by many who take Christian ground; the holiness of God's house has been superseded by worldliness, entertainment and the giving up of the true gospel. But there is no other gospel! Paul said, 'Even if an angel comes down from heaven, with another gospel, do not receive it!' (See Galatians 1:8). *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Timothy 1:15), is the only gospel and the only salvation is through repentance and faith in Christ. If we come that way and surrender wholly to Christ, God will open the windows of heaven in blessing.

We have had men like the Wesleys who went the length and breadth of this land, on horse-back, preaching the gospel and who were mightily blessed of God, and God can bless today... He has not changed... and even in our small companies, where

we may feel we can do so little, we must remember that revival begins with God and not with men. Nehemiah writes of what God had put in his heart to do for Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 2:12); that revival began with God, and not with Nehemiah!

In Hannah's day, she felt her own barrenness and went to God about it. How powerful prayer is! Some of us may remember a revival in the Isle of Lewis in the 1950s, which started with two sisters taking their burden to God in prayer, and continuing in prayer and God heard and answered their prayers.¹ Let us also remember that God will hear and answer our prayers!

**revival begins
with God**

Hannah, weak as she might have felt, took her burden to the Lord and she left it there. Elkanah, her husband, was quite happy with the way things were and so may we be! Years go by and Christian companies get weaker and finally close! Are we content with that? Hannah was not content; she took her burden to the Lord! She was concerned about new life! And so should we be!

The Word says, *"the lamp of God had not yet gone out" (1 Samuel 3:3)*, and although it is dim today, it has not yet gone out! Should we not, like Hannah, get before God about conditions today and pour out our soul and burdens to Him? Will He not answer our prayers? He did for Hannah and will do so for us. The Christian faith is not just going to fade away; it is going to end with the cry of the Spirit and the bride saying, *"Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20)*. That is how things are going to finish.

Let us therefore hold fast to the truth that *"God is able"* and let our prayer be that God will pour out a blessing and bring His work to light, for His glory and praise! God is working today, all

¹ Peggy and Christine Smith were singled out on a number of occasions as those who were particularly praying for revival, but there were many others on Lewis and Harris who were also praying. The Testimony article in this issue is by Kenneth Macdonald who was converted during that 1950s revival.

over the world, using weak human vessels, changed by Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and with hearts filled with the love of God.

I read in Acts 16, because this was the beginning of the church at Philippi, a church that started brightly and continued brightly. The work of Christ in them (the gold) was truly shining and Paul could speak well of their continuance, *“from the first day, until now” (Philippians 1:5)*. There was no turning back and Paul encourages them by his own example, to keep pressing on and to keep looking towards the goal.

Acts 16 indicates the great place that prayer has, both in this church’s beginnings and in its continuance. The women had gathered at the river, not to gossip, but to pray and I would encourage us all, both brothers and sisters, to spend more time in prayer and as we do so, we will see what God can do! Paul didn’t begin the work at Philippi; he linked on with what God had already begun in the hearts of these praying women.

This was the Lord’s work, but there was an enemy who would seek to hinder His work. There was a woman who had a spirit of Python and she appears *“as we were going to prayer”* and Paul, distressed, turned, and said to the spirit to come out of her and she was set free and troubled them no more.

It did not appear to work out well for Paul and Silas since they were scourged and imprisoned, but they were not distracted from God’s great work, and at midnight, in praying, they were *“praising God with singing and the prisoners listened to them”*. There are many prisoners today: prisoners to drugs, prisoners to alcohol, and prisoners to all kinds of things. The jailor slept — O let us not sleep! Even the Ephesians, who had so much light and truth, are exhorted to *“Wake up, thou that sleepest” (Ephesians 5:14)*. So, may we be awake to the great things God is doing today, and remember that He is a God who answers prayer. He answered this prayer with an earthquake, waking up the jailor, not only physically, but waking him to his need of salvation! And what a wonderful outcome, for *“he rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God”*.

In speaking about prayer I should certainly refer to the Lord Jesus as a Man of prayer, who expressed perfect dependence on God. He prayed at His baptism; He prayed before choosing the apostles; He spent whole nights in prayer to God; He prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, He prayed in Gethsemane and He prayed on the cross. What a prayer! *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34)*. Surely, a prayer that has been answered millions of times! May we be more like our Saviour, in true dependence on God.

Finally, I refer to the letter Paul wrote to the Philippians, indicating as it does that God’s work in them was continuing brightly, *“he who has begun in you a good work will complete it unto Jesus Christ’s day”* and Paul thanks God for his whole remembrance of them, constantly in *“my every supplication”*. What joy he had as he prayed and thought of these saints! Then later, he says, *“this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in full knowledge and all intelligence” (Philippians 1:9)*. Jesus taught, *“by this shall all know that ye are disciples of mine, if ye have love among yourselves” (John 13:35)*. What a testimony true love is among the people of God. It is like the gold and it shone brightly at Philippi!

Then in verse 19, he says, *“I know that this shall turn out for me, to salvation, through your supplication”*. The saints were thinking prayerfully of Paul, in his labours and in his imprisonment and Paul was confident their prayers would be answered.

Then in chapter 4 Paul says, *“the Lord is near”*. There may be a thought of the Lord’s coming in those words, but I feel there is a more general voice to us. When we pray, He is near; when we are in trouble, He is near, Yes, let us remember, that whatever our circumstances, the Lord is always near!

So Paul says, *“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”*. May our prayers be expanded, as we think of the sad state of the church and this nation and let us also remember that Paul says, *“with thanksgiving”*. Yes, truly we have so much to thank God for!

Finally, the word says *“and the peace of God, which surpasses*

every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). It does not imply that we will always get the answer that we wanted, but it does mean that we will have peace! Hannah had that peace; she poured out her soul before the Lord and left her burden there and she had peace.... "her countenance was no more as before".

May we all, through being more in prayer and in the presence of God, know the fulness of the peace that passes all understanding, and confide continually in the God who is able to bring about revival and to do even *"more than we can ask or think!"*

Brian Parr

An address at Warley, 15th October 2011

ADORNING THE TEACHING OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR – PART 1

Introduction

Paul, writing to Titus, exhorts believers to *"adorn the teaching... of our Saviour God in all things" (Titus 2:10)*. God is looking for the expression of divine teaching in the lives and conduct of men and women just like ourselves. Paul, writing to the Corinthian believers, says, *"Ye are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2)*. That is, there was something about the work of God in these saints that was an adornment.

Adornment seen in the woman of the city who was a sinner

"And turning to the woman he said to Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest me not water on my feet, but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me not a kiss, but she from the time I came in has not ceased kissing my feet. My head with oil

thou didst not anoint, but she has anointed my feet with myrrh. For which cause I say to thee, Her many sins are forgiven; for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little. And he said to her, Thy sins are forgiven... And he said to the woman, Thy faith has saved thee, go in peace. Luke 7:44-50

In Luke 7 we see the adornment that this woman brings into the Pharisee's house. In one sense, the house was lit up with the presence of Christ. But in another, this woman comes into the Pharisee's house and lights it up with her appreciation of Him. Her actions are all motivated by love for the Lord Jesus. That meant that there was an adornment about the woman to which the Lord could call attention. He says to Simon, "*Seest thou this woman*". I wonder whether the Lord Jesus could draw attention to any of us as adorning the teaching of our Saviour God?

Despite the coldness towards the Lord of Simon the woman shows her appreciation of Christ. That is something we should do as well. Despite the deep hostility to Christ that may be around there should be this demonstration of warmth, of affection for the Lord as the One who has done so much for us. With the boldness of faith she comes into this house and anoints His feet with her tears. It does not seem that she said anything, but her actions said it all. As well as affection there is a certain amount of understanding. She has myrrh with her as though she had some indication that this blessed One was in a suffering pathway. It seems as though she had previously had some contact with Christ and now she comes with this treasure.

The terms of the truth are, maybe, generally known by us — the principles of the doctrine of Scripture — but in this woman the teaching is made attractive. This woman came into the house, making no claims to be anything except a sinner. But when she went out of the house she went with a real sense of forgiveness, for the Lord had announced it publicly. She had the Friend of sinners in her heart. Publicly she gets clearance of her sins here but I think in her heart she knew the beauty of that forgiveness as she poured the myrrh out on His feet.

When Jesus justifies this woman before Simon He refers to her works, bringing out the adornment. That is what Simon could take account of. When the Lord justifies her directly, it is because of her faith. So we have the works and faith both seen in this woman. Then He says, *“for she loved much; but he to whom little is forgiven loves little”*. The Lord had been telling a parable to Simon about two debtors, one who owed 500 pence and another 50. Both had been forgiven by the creditor and the Lord asked Simon which of the former debtors would love the creditor the most. Even Simon would not say he had no sin but he would put himself in the “50” bracket whereas this woman unashamedly put herself in the “500”. As she was forgiven much, so she loved much.

**works and faith both
[are] seen in this woman**

It should draw our hearts out when He turns to the woman — it almost seems that He had His back to Simon; He is looking at the woman. *“Turning to the woman he said... Seest thou this woman?”* Could the Lord say something like that about us? Is there that in our lives — this adornment that is attractive to the eye of Christ?

She does not draw attention to herself. Her actions draw attention to Jesus. She stands at His feet, **behind** Him. But He draws attention to the features that were so pleasing to God that came out in her life. There is striking humility with this woman. She stands behind Him, weeping. There was an adornment which had never been seen in the Pharisee’s house before, when this woman came into it.

When people look at us do they just see persons who do not do certain things, or persons who just engage in certain Christian activities, or do they see something flowing out of our lives that magnifies the Lord Jesus? There is to be a putting on of the new man. Some of the features of that man are outlined in Colossians 3. They are features that were seen in Christ:— compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience and the like (see

Colossians 3:12). The adornment is not something outward but it flows from the heart — a heart occupied with Christ.

The world around is very cold as far as Christ is concerned. It is the same world that rejected and crucified Him. But is there in my life any demonstration of what is seen in this woman who showed that she was sympathetic with all that is afoot, all that He is about to do?

We need eyes to see where believers are adorning the teaching of our Saviour God. Simon did not have these eyes; he was looking at past history but the Lord said, *“Seest thou this woman”*, Simon? Do you not see it as I see it? Do you have no concept of how much this means to Me? And so it is today. The Lord would convey His appreciation of everything that is done for Him.

Alex Mowat

Based on a Bible reading at Chester, 24th March 2012.

In the next issue (God willing) Part 2 – Adornment expressed in the character of a little child

From “Living Water” No 13

JESUS STANDING AMONGST HIS OWN

John 20:19-26

In this scripture we see Jesus after He had suffered on the cross and shed His precious blood, standing in the midst of His disciples. What a marvellous work He had done. He said, *“It is finished”*. Perfect completed work of the Lord! He was buried and He rose again on the third day, but He was no longer serving publicly, no longer serving in Israel.

Jesus, out of death, was here for forty days and then went to the right hand of God. During the forty days He came to where His disciples were on two occasions on the first day of the

week. The disciples had been scattered after Jesus was taken captive. Several went to the tomb. Peter and John saw and believed and went away to their own homes, but Mary stood at the tomb. She was not content with knowledge; she wanted Jesus and Jesus gives her a special manifestation of Himself. She does not recognise who He was to start with but she wanted Jesus above everything else; nothing else would do for her but to find the Lord. Oh that every one of us, every believer, had this burning desire to find Jesus, to be with Him. She gets a wonderful message. There had never been a message like this before. Jesus said to Mary, *“go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and to Your God”*. She found them and conveyed the message.

At the end of the first day of the week Jesus comes into the midst and stands there. The disciples recognise Him this time. *“Jesus came and stood in their midst, and says to them, Peace be to you”*. Eight days later He came again. On two first days of the week, Jesus comes and stands in the midst. Jesus comes in through closed doors.

Before Jesus died, He said, *“If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him”*. And again, *“I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you”*. He said these things in response to the question, *“Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us and not to the world?”* This is not Jesus standing and crying to the world; this is Jesus with His disciples. He comes to His own, comes to those who love Him, to those who have come together; He makes His presence known.

He says something; He shows them something; and He breathes into them. It must have been a marvellous experience which was not to be missed. Thomas missed it the first time but he was there the second time.

Think of Jesus coming into the midst; He says something to them, He says, *“Peace be to you”*, twice. In the Old Testament we are told of people who say, *“Peace, peace! when there is no*

peace” (Jeremiah 6:14 & 8:11). But there is real peace now because Jesus has made peace by the blood of His cross (see Colossians 1:20). He comes to them and He says, “*Peace be to you*”.

It is a wonderful thing to get a fresh sense of the peace which flows from Christ. He also said, “*Peace be to you*” the next time He came. I think He realised His disciples needed a fresh sense of peace. I think we do too. There are many things that trouble us even as believers, personal things, household matters, business concerns, church matters. Jesus comes to His own and says, “*Peace be to you*”. Everything is settled as far as God is concerned; everything is settled in the death of Jesus.

Then He showed them something, “...*having said this he showed to them his hands and his side*”. It must have been wonderful to see His hands. They knew what had happened to those hands. They knew the way those hands had served them and washed their feet. They knew His hands had been nailed to the cross. They knew His side had been pierced with a spear. They actually saw the living Christ, out of death, not a spirit but a real living Man. This would reassure their hearts. They had loved their Master and had followed Him for years. They had lost Him for the time being when He was taken captive. It must have been tremendously reassuring for them when Jesus stood in the midst and they saw Him and heard Him.

Then Jesus said, “*as the Father has sent me forth, I also send you. And having said this, He breathed into them*” They receive a blessing to reassure them, to comfort them, to establish their hearts and to confirm to them that Christ was really alive. But it was not to stop there: “*as the Father hath sent me forth, I also send you*”. They were to go out from that circle with the breath of Christ, with the feelings of Christ, with the Spirit of Christ, and they were to do things as He did them.

I think they did. When they spoke to Thomas, they did not

give him a scolding for not being there, did they? They could easily have given him a rough time, have told him that he ought to have been there. What they said was, “*We have seen the Lord*”. Thomas made sure that he was not missing the next time! In principle they did things with the breath of Christ. We need to learn to do this. As having the gift of the Spirit we should be able to do things with the breath of Christ, the way that He did things. As the Father sent Him forth, He sent His disciples so that they might not only say and do the right things, but say them and do them with the same spirit that Jesus had displayed. What a lot of sorrows would have been avoided among God’s people if these things had been so. Let us learn from them. Let us look at Jesus standing in the midst saying, “*Peace be to you*”, showing them His hands and His side to assure them that He was really alive and sending them out with His peace and His breath to represent Him in the world where He is absent.

By coming again, eight days afterwards, I think He was also teaching them the value of the first day of the week and He was teaching them, too, that He would come to them not once, but again and again and again. I believe He still does. He makes Himself known. I do not mean that He is seen corporeally, but Jesus still comes where He is loved, to where He is appreciated. He loves to make Himself known, freshly known, so that hearts are encouraged, cheered and invigorated to go out and represent Him in the world.

Ken Hollands

An extract from an address at Basildon, 30th May 1995

This article was selected for reprinting from “Living Water” No 13 by Rosie Trim.

God willing, in issue No 114 there will be a reprint from “Living Water” No 14 selected by David Greeves.

If there is an article (or part of an article) from a back number of “Living Water” that you would like to see reprinted, I would be very glad to hear from you. Ed.

Poetry Selection

PRAISE

*Unto Him who died to save us,
Praise, eternal praise, be given!
Praise Him, Praise the Saviour – Jesus!
Now enthroned in highest heaven.
His a name all names excelling,
Lord of all, His worth proclaim;
His blest worth God now is telling,
Praise Him, praise Him, praise His name!*

*Praise Him, who in grace unbounded
Came to earth to bleed and die!
None shall ever be confounded
Who in faith on Him rely.
Praise the Lord! Let each redeemed one
Join the song and praise His name;
Soon on high we'll chant His praises,
Then in fuller, sweeter strain.*

THE SON OF GOD

*He gave Himself, in love divine,
To ransom me, the price He paid;
Upon the cross His blood was shed,
Upon Him there my sins were laid.
Yes, Jesus died upon the tree,
Who loved and gave Himself for me.*

*He gave Himself, who was so rich.
To make me rich, He poor became;
Gave all He had – His life – His blood;
Can e'er I cease to spread His fame?
To Jesus glory ever be,
Who loved and gave Himself for me.*

*He gave Himself, He liveth now
For me, my Saviour, Shepherd, Friend;
I'm waiting for the hour so near,
When with a shout He will descend;
Caught up, I then His face shall see,
Who loved and gave Himself for me.*

CHRIST IS COMING

*Christ is coming! He who suffered
For His people on the tree;
Mighty victor! He has triumphed,
Lo, He comes to set them free,
He is coming
With the shout of victory.*

*Christ is coming, 'tis His promise,
'Surely I will quickly come'.
With a shout from heaven descending
He will come and take us home.
He is coming
Coming soon to claim His own.*

*Christ is coming! Crowned with glory
To this earth He'll come again;
Every knee shall bow before Him,
Every tongue confess His name.
He is coming,
Coming over all to reign.*

All these poems are by E. E. Nichols (1866 – 1952)

Testimony Section

MY TESTIMONY

During the late 1940s and early 1950s there was on Lewis and other of the Scottish Western Isles a very distinct work of God and there were numerous conversions. Duncan Campbell, whose name appears in the testimony below, was prominently used of God during this time, though he always maintained that he was one preacher amongst many. He also disliked the term revival, always referring to what happened on Lewis and the other Isles as an “awakening”. Kenneth Macdonald was one of those converted at this time. This is his account of what happened.

I often thought about God — and God no doubt thought about me. But while I thought about God, I certainly did not walk in His ways: far, far from it. When God moved in revival power in our part of the Island, I was twenty-nine years of age, but I had no taste for the things of the Spirit.

I had been in the war. What terrible scenes we witnessed! I once stood on the top of a trench when six shells landed at my feet and lifted me into the air. Thank God they did not explode or I would not be here to tell the tale. I dived back into the trench which had about a foot of water in it, and found my New Testament. It was covered with ants, and even as I turned its pages the words came to me as if from God: ‘Will you give Me your heart now?’

‘No, Lord’, I said, ‘but if You will leave me until I am seventy, I’ll come then.’ I had every intention of coming, but no, no, not now! I was not going to miss out on life. Here I was, having survived that awesome incident when I could have been blown to bits, and yet I would not heed the warning. I had my own agenda and I would not yield., God was a vague, though awesome

entity, far-off, yet continually penetrating my armour and bringing discomfort and unhappiness to my soul. I would not recognise His holiness and majesty.

In November 1950, Duncan Campbell came to Garrabost, Point (Isle of Lewis). I had been going to church, and because everybody seemed to be going to the meetings I also attended.

My parents had come to the Lord in the 1939 revival, which was a revival of prayer, rather than of preaching, and which had a great influence in many places. At that time to attend the meetings, they would walk all the way from Garrabost to Shader, and back, often not arriving home until 4 a.m. This they did many times but it had no ill effects on their health. They were thrilled to be involved in the glory of those days, and now here it was again. They revelled in the meetings and were so grateful that God had given them the privilege of seeing once again the gracious moving of the Spirit.

In spite of all this background, I was as wild as could be! The pub was my joy and delight. Our hobby was drinking, and yet more drinking to which was added the fun of playing darts and going to the cinema. Often we were so drunk that we could not even see the screen and had to be taken out for a while to sober up. Yet I was not happy! There was such deep dissatisfaction in my heart and whatever I did I could not fill the ever-increasing and yawning hole within me. I tried to be happy, oh yes, I tried; but the more strenuous my quest, the more distant my goal. I was miserable and could not lift myself from the despondency which enveloped me.

Every now and again the word would come to me, as from God, 'Kenny, will you give Me your heart?' I did not realise that the Lord Himself was speaking to me. And now the meetings were here – every night! I walked together with others to the meetings. They would be talking about the sermon, the singing, the blessing, the fellowship. I was surrounded by all this religious mania.

Remarkably, even as an unsaved man, I never swore nor did I

What could I do to make myself happy?

take the Lord's name in vain, but one night, coming from the meeting, I used a word that brought a strong reaction from

some of my companions. 'Are you swearing coming from the Lord's house?' they said, and I felt condemned.

Later on there was a meeting in my aunt's house, and I went along. The place was packed. I went through the hallway and round the corner, for I was petrified that I would get converted. I had responded to the invitation to come to the meeting, but I did not want to listen. They sang – oh, how they sang! I will never forget the singing. It was so whole-hearted and so full of unction and power. Duncan Campbell was sitting on a seat in the kitchen before the service started, and when the service began; he got up and came directly to me.

'Will you please go and sit where I was,' he said, for I want to go from room to room with the message'. I did as requested, but throughout the service I was plagued with the thought, 'Why did he pick on me?/' As I sat there I had a conversation with myself:

'Kenny, how old are you?'

'I am twenty-nine'

'Kenny, are you happy?'

'No!'

'What else can you do to make yourself happy?'

I thought of the celebrations at the end of the year and at the beginning of the next. I had ordered a bottle or two. But just the other day, after the Sunday service in the church, I had sneaked round the back of the church and consumed almost a whole bottle in my attempts to drown the gnawing conviction of sin. 'What could I do to make myself happy? What, oh, what could I do?'

All this time, while I was musing, Mr Campbell was preaching. I was busy with my thoughts, when suddenly, in the midst of all this turmoil, a word penetrated my soul. It came from God – I knew it came from God! In my innermost being I heard, 'I am the

Way'. God spoke it to my heart. The service came to a close, and in my misery I wondered how to come to terms with all my conflicting emotions, and what to do with this insistent word: 'I am the Way'.

The preacher was still speaking. He said, 'A room will be cleared and all those who have come to the place where you feel that nothing in this world can satisfy your heart, please get up and make your way there. I cannot convert anyone, but God can, and He will fill the longings of your soul.'

The sheer horror of it! How could I get up and walk through these people so tightly packed? Everyone knew me. I looked upon a sea of heads. It seemed to me there were so many people. Why everyone had a hundred heads! I could never get through. Suddenly I received unusual and amazing strength. I stood up and in my heart I said, 'Lord, if You will take me, I'll come now.' It was settled. In an instant my life was changed. It was as sudden as that. As I began to walk to the room, an elder took hold of me with obvious delight. Suddenly, even as I walked, I was filled with unspeakable joy. My heart was absolutely free.

Duncan Campbell was in the room with some of the converts. He spoke a few words about the gospel and prayed. I was filled with glory. I knew that God had come to me and that I had met Him savingly in Christ.

As I emerged from the room, someone said to my mother, 'You'll not need to pray for Kenny anymore', to which she replied, 'It will be a different kind of prayer now'.

I never, ever, looked back. God saved me that night in the house and He will never hear the end of it! I will praise Him throughout eternity for His patience and grace with a sinner like me. I have never lost what He gave me that night. In addition to the joy of salvation, He gave me tears, and I have never lost those tears. What a sacred moment! One can never describe on paper the sacredness, the wonder, the glory, the inspiration, the thrill of that moment.

It was a revival; I have no doubt about that. It was God working in our midst. Numbers came to the Lord at that time. Where ever you went, you could not get away from the presence of God. This is the one thing that I will ever take with me, the abiding memory of that time – the presence of God. You were in God’s presence where ever you went. It was just like a canopy over the whole island.

I recall attending a communion service in Stornoway after I was converted. The familiar words of the communion rang out: ‘This do in remembrance of Me’. I was not eligible for I had not yet given an account of my conversion before the session of my own church to be accepted or rejected, and my heart nearly broke. I so wanted to participate.

In the next two months I grew in strength and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and was thrilled to be part of the Christian scene in my home area. That which I had avoided I now fully embraced.

At the end of the two months I went to appear before the kirk session. This was an awesome event. I thought, ‘They will ask awkward questions and I will make a fool of myself. They will probably reject me, and even if they accept me, they will ask me to pray in public next Sunday’. The battle raged within me. I felt that I would rather go and drown in the loch rather than face these authoritative, serious and solemn elders. What turmoil was in my breast! But go to them I must, so I went round to the church hall to meet them.

I need not have feared, for when I took my seat the men began to weep. Some sobbed openly. To them it was so wonderful to see me in the church when they knew what I had been. One of them at last stuttered, ‘The only sign we need of the reality of the work in his soul is to see Kenny Ban here before us’.* They had observed the change and had rejoiced together in the

*Because of his fair hair, Kenneth Macdonald was known on Lewis as Kenny Ban

wonderful work of God in my soul. I was accepted with great joy and gratitude to God for His grace towards me. Praise His wonderful name!

Kenneth Macdonald.

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In the next issue (God willing) there will be a further testimony from the Lewis awakening by Catherine Campbell.

A Voice from the Past

"FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD"

(James 2:26)

You believe that God in His infinite love sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Saviour; what proof is there in your life of the reality of your belief? Does the wonder which this immense manifestation of the love of God should create, or the gratitude, or the joy show itself in your spirit and conduct?

You believe that Christ is the Lord of Life: what do you do that you would not do if you did not believe it?

You believe that Christ's saving work is available to all men: what effect does that belief have upon your actions? What sympathy do you show to Christ's great purpose? What are you doing that men may know what Christ has done for them, and has endured for them?

You believe with the apostle Paul that we must all give an account of ourselves to God: do you? From what sin does it restrain you? To what duty, that would be otherwise neglected, does it impel you? Have you avoided a single sinful habit, or a single sinful act through the thought of that final account?

You believe that God is your Father: do you? Be honest with yourself, and ask what difference it would make — not in the

sentiment of your life but in your actual conduct — if you ceased to believe it. Your children, I suppose, could tell you a dozen things that they did, or left undone, last week because they respect your authority. How many things have you done, or left undone, last week, because you respect God's authority? You believe that there is heaven on the other side of death: do you? Does that belief make any difference to you? Does it make you more patient in trouble? Does your heart remain quiet when you suffer injustice? Does it enable you to bear losses with less agitation? Does it enable you to place an altogether different estimate on wealth, and all that wealth can purchase, from that which other men place who do not believe in heaven? Does it make you less eager for social position and public honour?

Paul, James – either of them, might ask these questions. I entreat every one of you to endeavour to answer them honestly, and to remember that if a man says he hath faith and have not works – works that are a clear result of his faith – that faith cannot save him.

Robert Dale (1829-1895)

A word for Today

THE LOVE OF GOD

John 3: 14-16

Genesis 22: 1-3

Luke 20: 9-16

Ephesians 5: 1, 2

My theme today is the love of God. It is not in mind to go into these scriptures in very much depth but that rather we should just gain impressions of the God who *"so loved... that He gave"*. Then to enquire as to how far we ourselves have so appreciated that love that we have become imitators of God, as it speaks

elsewhere of those who become *"partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1:4).

So I began with this very well-known reference that *"God so loved the world"*. John chapter 3 is very well-known, *"as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world..."* It is wonderful, the favour that has been given to us that we have been brought into the realm of life. The lifting up the serpent in the wilderness conveys something to our hearts of the great transaction that took place when the Lord was made sin and the blessedness of the divine remedy: he who looked lived (see Numbers 21). Yet, if there is any one point in the preaching of the gospel where I feel very weak, it is presenting that side of the truth. Whatever can we say about the gathering up of the whole sin problem, covering all dispensations: the whole thing, root and branch, all gathered up in those three hours, placed on the head of our Saviour. *"Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Why did He do it? Because God so loved!

Then we need to see too, the divine imperative, *"even so must the Son of man be lifted up"*. That refers not only to His lifting up at Calvary but also to His lifting up as He came out of the realm of death: the glory of the resurrection. Our hope is based on a blessed, living Saviour as He has made known to us the love of God, and the love of God has been put in all our hearts by the Holy Spirit. But I have wondered at times whether we do not need help as to the way that love of God is to be put into circulation. Objective knowledge is not our problem, but we often are not very good in applying it. That is why we need continually to dwell on the provision of the love of God. I believe we are being recalled back to these basic fundamentals and to become intimate with a God who so loved that He gave His only Son. Our Saviour expressed it so tremendously in His words from the cross: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Despite all the hatred, the blasphemy and the horrible

things they did to Him yet He could say, *“forgive them”*.

Now, I read in Genesis 22 to give an illustration of what was involved for the Father and the Son in the perfect offering made by the Lord Jesus. We read the word to Abraham: *“Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest”*. Let us recall that both Abraham and Sarah his wife were well beyond the natural line; they had no hope whatsoever of getting an heir, they were both too old. Yet in the wonder of divine grace Isaac is born, a type (or illustration) of the heavenly Man.

Now God’s word came to Abraham *“Take now thy son, thine only son... Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and there offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of”*. It speaks to us of the “burnt-offering” character of the death of Jesus. In Leviticus chapter 1 we see that the whole of the burnt offering was consumed as an offering of sweet odour to God. The whole of it was acceptable. Christ’s offering of Himself *“spotless to God” (Hebrews 9:14)*, was completely acceptable. The Holy Spirit would bring before us in the account of Abraham and Isaac something of the wonderful expenditure of divine love that was made known at the cross.

I have been very impressed seeing the way that the Lord went to the cross. His perfect obedience to the Father governed Him in everything. We are told that He *“offered himself spotless to God” (Hebrews 9:4)*. That is His sacrifice as pictured in the burnt-offering. Wicked men nailed Him to the cross as we read, *“they pierced my hands and my feet” (Psalm 22:16)*. Then that cross was lifted up and there He hangs, a demonstration of the love of God. *“Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest ... and...offer him up”*. May we say, with great reverence, God did just that.

If our time today does nothing else but magnify Christ as the One who placed Himself at the divine disposal it will be time well spent. But I trust that we can, in spirit, really rise to bless the God who has provided this wondrous means of escape and

brought in untold blessing alongside of the means of escape that we might be for the divine pleasure forever. God commends His love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (see Romans 5:8). There was just nothing about us in any way whatsoever that warranted His intervention in divine mercy. We were all hopelessly lost. We forget it at times. I do not think we ponder enough that God found us where we were on the road that led to hell. It is sometimes thought that to bring one's personal experiences into an occasion such as this is not appropriate. I do not agree at all. I think there is benefit in relating our varied experiences as to how we came to know Jesus as Saviour. Paul held onto that, did he not? He speaks of, *"the Son of God, who has loved me and given himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20). That was in his heart all the time through his ministry.

Now, in Luke 20 we read that, *"the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: perhaps when they see him they will respect him"*. If it were not in Scripture, we would hardly dare apply this reasoning to God, *"What shall I do?"* There are many lessons that can be drawn from this passage but I am thinking of it as the expression of the counsels of divine love.

That God should say in Himself, *"What shall I do?"* reminds me of the hymn:

*O LOVE divine! which had its source,
Our blessèd God, in Thee alone;
When time had fully run its course,
Thy Son came forth to make it known*

What expenditure! Let us bring the sentiment of chapter 22 of Genesis into this very matter. God knew when He said *"perhaps ... they will respect him"*, that they would not. *"This is the heir; come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may become ours. And having cast him forth out of the vineyard, they killed him."* I believe this reference here, *"What shall I do?"* relates to the deepest, innermost feelings of God Himself. He knew very well

what He was going to do. He was going to send His Son to effect His will. In the light of divine foreknowledge He knew they would say, *"This is the heir; come, let us kill him"*.

Now, the reference in Ephesians 5 brings us to some practical application. *"Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love"*. The *"be ye therefore"* links back with verses 30–32 of chapter 4: *"do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption"*. Now, that is a wonderful blessing. Perhaps we do not stress sufficiently what happens when we meet our Saviour for the very first time. We have already been given the gift of faith: we place that faith on the Saviour where He is and He comes alongside of us. He brings us into the divine family; He gives us the privilege of sonship and seals it all by the work of the Holy Spirit; *"the Holy Spirit of God, with which ye have been sealed for the day of redemption"*. That is to say, every Christian on earth bears the stamp, whether they understand it or not, bears God's stamp and the seal of divine ownership.

So we also read, *"Let all bitterness, and heat of passion, and wrath, and clamour, and injurious language, be removed from you, with all malice; and be to one another kind, compassionate, forgiving one another, so as God also in Christ has forgiven you"*. That is a point we need to bear in mind in working out the many and varied problems that seem to come our way. They are allowed: God is not the author of them but they are allowed, to bring out the Spirit of Christ and to show whether we appreciate the glory of the love of God. *"So as God also in Christ has forgiven you. Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children"*. In the simplicity of Christ-like faith I am to be an imitator of God. May we be helped in it, for His name's sake.

Ron Gregory

based on a reading in Yeovil, November 1993.