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Living Water

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Recent Ministry

THE PERFECTIONS OF JESUS

Luke 4: 1-13

John 14: 30

Matthew 26: 36-46

I desire at this time to convey one or two impressions of the perfections of Jesus. E. H. Chater's hymn, speaking of the Lord's preciousness to the Father, says:

*In Thy grace Thou now hast brought us
Sharers of Thy joy to be,
And to know the blessed secret
Of His preciousness to Thee.*

My desire in speaking of the perfections of Jesus is that our hearts might be freshly attracted and attached to Jesus personally. It is something I would commend especially to those who are younger — take time to study the perfections of Jesus. They are food for the soul. They will stimulate your affections towards Himself; they will give you treasures by which you can respond to Him in relation to what you have found in Him, what you have enjoyed in His precious life and pathway, what you have found that has attracted you to Himself. So I desire that each heart might be attracted by and attached to Jesus.

In Luke's gospel we read of Jesus in the wilderness, tempted of the devil. It is striking that, in his account of the temptations, Luke speaks throughout of this personage as "*the devil*". We know that he has other names and is described elsewhere as: "*the great dragon, the ancient serpent, he who is called Devil and Satan*" (*Revelation 12:9*). I think it has been rightly said that as Satan, he is the great adversary of God's people — always against them, accusing and blaming. Whereas the devil is the deceiver — and do we not know it? If we are honest we know what the devil is as the deceiver. He dresses himself up in different ways and makes different appeals to our senses, our ambitions and our lusts.

How beautiful it is to see the Lord Jesus in the wilderness! A Man

of a different spirit and of a different order. He is impregnable to all the devil's attacks. There was nothing that the devil could touch in the Lord Jesus – there was nothing in Him that was vulnerable, nothing touchable. Jesus had just been baptised and *“full of the Holy Spirit”* He *“returned from the Jordan”* where the Father's delight had been expressed in His beloved Son. Never had the Father had such a blessed Person ever before Him. In the Lord Jesus there was a perfectly attuned response to every divine desire, a perfect expression of the Father's pleasure and will. *“Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I have found my delight”* (Luke 3:22). That is the Father's assessment of those thirty years which preceded the Lord's entry into public ministry. We do well to be reminded of those thirty years, marked by the perfect humility, obedience, patience and dependence of Jesus.

Now the Lord is in the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. I believe what comes out in the wilderness in a special way is the perfection of dependence. These three temptations suggest that to me. The Lord did not move outside the expression of perfect dependence before God in these three temptations. It would seem these temptations covered the whole period of forty days. How tested the Lord was. What challenges the devil raised against Him. Would the Lord succumb? He was forty days without food and He hungered. Some of us get very hungry going for a day without food. I had a blood test recently and was not to eat or drink for twelve hours and it was a test to me! Well, the Lord was like that for forty days and the devil comes to Him and says, *“If thou be Son of God, speak to this stone that it become bread”*. Could He have done that? Yes, He could. He could have had what He wanted in the wilderness. He is the One of whom it is said, *“he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast”* (Psalm 33:9). He could have said to a stone, ‘Become bread’, and it would have come about. But His reply is one of blessed dependence, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God”*.

What a lesson for us! What do we live on? Some people live on memories. Some memories are very precious but we must have a sense of having God's word to live on, the living word – not

some dead thing but a living sense of God speaking. Hence the great value in the morning of reading the scriptures. I commend that, we tend to forget these good habits. Days are busy and we have to get up and off to business and school. What a rush it all can be, but let us give some time for a word from God for the day. I speak practically, you husbands, you fathers here, make sure your family get something from God to start the day, before they set out upon the busy day ahead. It will make a lot of difference to the day's outcome.

Then the third temptation (we will leave for a moment the second one), the third temptation brings out, once again, the Lord's wondrous and perfect dependence. His response to the suggestion that He could throw Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple is, *"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"*. We need to be careful with our lives. Mr. John Trim, known to many here, once said, 'You cannot go for a bungee jump and expect the Lord's protection'. I think that was a wholesome remark. You cannot do foolish things and say, 'It's all right, the Lord will care for me'. I don't believe you can guarantee that. Practical piety is important in our lives. That is, we bring God into the things that we do day by day in a practical way, and we seek to be with God in those things. Not just nominally to bring Him in, but seeking to ensure that our days are regulated by our link with God.

The second temptation: this is huge, isn't it? The devil showed the Lord all the kingdoms of the world and said, *"I will give thee all this power and their glory... if therefore thou wilt do homage before me"*. Think of this vast vision the devil brings before the Lord: power and glory. That is what men want. Would the Lord succumb? He had lived the best part of thirty years in Nazareth, an obscure village in northern Galilee. It had quite a bad reputation; someone said, *"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)*. That is the reputation Nazareth had and the Lord had lived there for almost thirty years. He was known as the carpenter's son, is that not beautiful? Think of the perfection of His carpentry! Then this vision of power and glory is put before the Man from Nazareth; I believe it was a critical moment. Would the Lord succumb to this great temptation from the devil? *"...all this power,*

**every day He pleased
the Father. That was
the pathway of Jesus**

and their glory". The devil says, 'It is mine!' I suppose that is true, true because the power and glory of the world has become the great prize of unholy ambition, answering to every corrupt desire

in the heart of man away from God. Elsewhere the Scripture speaks of the devil as, "*the god of this world*" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and again, "*the whole world lies in the wicked one*" (1 John 5:19).

The devil offered the Lord this power and glory; this was a great vision! It has ever turned the hearts of men and they have succumbed to this great vision, power and glory. Men are seeking it today, power, glory, renown, fame. The devil was trying to strike a bargain. He said, "*If therefore thou shalt do homage before me, all of it shall be thine.*" That was the offer. The devil would centralise the power in the hands of one person upon the condition that the power was received from him, and the homage rendered to him for it, so that he might be the instrument behind it, designed to thwart the will and pleasure of God. That is what the devil wants; he wants men to oppose God's will. But the Lord was proof against that. His perfection of dependence shines beautifully throughout these temptations. His reply is: "*It is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God, and him alone shalt thou serve*". What a word that is for us!

Now, I read in John 14 to remind us of this phrase, "*the ruler of the world comes, and in me he has nothing*". Nothing! The devil was evidently seeking another opportunity to assail the Lord. Elsewhere the Lord says, "*he that has sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him*", (John 8:29). Always, every day, He pleased the Father. That was the pathway of Jesus here. Blessed, perfect Man.

Now, where we read in Matthew, we see the Lord in Gethsemane. What perfection shone in Him there. Gethsemane means oil press. What pressure came upon the Lord in Gethsemane. Not now forty days — perhaps just over an hour. "*The ruler of the world comes* (John 14:30). Where we read in Luke 4 it says, "*the devil, having*

completed every temptation, departed from him for a time". Now in Gethsemane he returns.

I would suggest that Gethsemane brings out the perfection of obedience. It speaks to us of the most precious way in which the Lord, under the greatest pressure that could be known, remained absolutely committed to God's will. He shrank from the awfulness of what lay before Him, because the sufferings through which He went in Gethsemane were in anticipation of what He would actually bear at Golgotha.

What sufferings for the Lord: in His spirit inwardly going through it all with God, the whole issue of what Golgotha and the cross would eventually mean: the awfulness of God's judgment against sin, the awfulness of death, and also the awfulness that lay upon Israel in the broken law they had failed to keep before their God. The Lord in the pressures of Gethsemane had these mighty weights upon His spirit.

We read, *"My soul is very sorrowful even unto death", "he began to be sorrowful and deeply depressed"*. These are extraordinary words applied to the Son of God. If they were not in scripture who would dare put them in that way? What weighed upon the Lord's spirit! In the perfection of His Manhood He could not but recoil from the cross, for it would mean the forsaking of God. It was the essence of His perfection to recoil from it; on the other hand, it was the essence of His perfection to take it up, to drink the cup and hence the perfection of His obedience shines under God's eye. He was entirely subject to His Father's will. How precious the thoughts of Jesus in Gethsemane are. All human help had gone; the disciples went to sleep. But Jesus prays three times. I suppose that represents a full testimony to the blessedness of the perfection of Jesus in this pressure scene in Gethsemane.

Think of what He says, *"If this cannot pass from me unless I drink it, thy will be done"*. How can we enter into some of the depths of the feelings of the Lord in these most remarkable verses of Scripture? Matthew and Mark are the two pressure gospels and they have a similar text, but Matthew perhaps gives us the fulness of it. Luke tells us that so great was the pressure upon the Lord that His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down upon

the earth. Think of the intensity and the awfulness of what the Lord went through, absolutely and infinitely perfect, and absolutely and infinitely holy. We read, *“The*

**He was forsaken,
that I might never be**

hour has drawn nigh, and the Son of man is delivered up into the hands of sinners”. I suppose that was the external pressure. All the way through His life the Lord was dogged by the external pressures from the scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the elders. All the debates, the arguments, the ridicule, the insults; all these He bore, but they were the external pressures. But in Gethsemane it was a personal confrontation between Himself and Satan. Satan came to seek, if possible, to turn the Lord aside from the will of God. What shines is the perfection of the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May our hearts feed upon this blessed Man. May we never tire of turning to Him to just be in His presence. Not necessarily to speak, asking for things, but to be in His presence, to know something of the preciousness of communion with Himself, apart from need. I say that carefully because we are all needy persons. But surely there is something about personal communion to enrich our souls, to develop affection, to draw out a deeper desire to be for Him in the scene where He has once been.

All that our Lord endured was not on His own account. He was *“holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners”* (Hebrews 7:26). That was Jesus in manhood. His sufferings were not on His behalf; it was for God’s glory and for the blessing of every repenting sinner. How wonderful!

Later in Matthew we read of His cry on the cross, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46). That was what the Lord was anticipating in Gethsemane, in His spirit — the forsaking of God — terrible thing. *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Why was the Lord Jesus forsaken? Is there an answer in Scripture? Is there? Well, there is a suggestion, prophetically, in Psalm 22. But there is an answer in my heart — He was forsaken, that I might never be; and I trust in your heart

as well if you believe on Him. Blessed Man who did it all — blessed, glorious Saviour!

Paul tells us in Philippians (chapter 2:8, 9), going over the downward steps that Jesus took, that He became, *“obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him”* (Philippians 2:8-9). What an answer to His wondrous obedience! God has Him now, at His right hand, crowned with glory and honour. That is where my blessed Saviour is. Is He your Saviour? Can you answer me, look me in the eye and say, ‘Yes, He is my Saviour?’ Can you say honestly that ‘I owe it all to Him’? I do. Without Him I would be going to hell and so would you. Have you ever thanked Him for that wondrous blessing?

This blessed, glorious Person has ascended above all heavens. He is there never more to be challenged by the devil. As He ascended the angels bowed to Him. I love to think of it. The scripture says He *“passed through the heavens”* (Hebrews 4:14), and again *“He has also ascended up above all the heavens”* (Ephesians 4:10). When the Lord went up, when He ascended, these great beings, Michael and Gabriel, they bowed to Jesus as He went up. The cherubim, the seraphim, they bowed to Him; *“Angels, authorities and powers, being made subject to him”* (1 Peter 3:22). He is worthy, gloriously worthy. Could an angel have done the work that He did? No, they could not. He did it all; praise His name, blessed Saviour.

Well, I just wanted to convey these simple impressions. I trust that the Lord and the Holy Spirit might use something of them to enrich our souls and to enlarge our affections. There is a hymn that says:-

*Ah, Lord, enlarge our scanty thought,
To know the wonders Thou hast wrought;
Unloose our stamm’ring tongues to tell
Thy love, immense, unsearchable!*

Sometimes I feel a bit impoverished to know how to speak suitably of such a glorious Person. But, surely, there are opportunities to respond from the heart and make much of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. I find that the appeal of the Lord Jesus in His supper *“This*

do in remembrance of Me” is one such opportunity, and we have that special occasion tomorrow morning. May we all come up for that time filled with deepened impressions of Himself and be given liberty, by the Holy Spirit, to express those affections to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, may our hearts be attracted by Him and the more firmly attached to Him, every one of us here. Amen.

Malcolm Wallach

An address at Defford, 6th October 2012

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Years ago I heard a very beautiful hymn on a tape. The chorus was this:-

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

It was written in 1918 by Helen Lemmel as a result of meeting a Christian who had given up a career as a talented artist to preach to the Muslims in Algeria for thirty-eight years. Why would someone give up their career, their gift to do that? Well, they had seen the blessedness of the Lord Jesus and had turned their eyes towards Him. That is what I want to speak about tonight with the Lord’s help – looking unto Him.

The scriptures read speak about:

- A man who looked to the Lord Jesus and became a worshipper (John 9: 30-38)
- Peter seeing the Lord’s look and being adjusted by it (Luke 22:54-62)
- Stephen, who saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God and whose spirit was affected by it (Acts 7:54-60)
- The Hebrew Christians who were exhorted to look to Jesus so they might be helped in endurance (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- John’s word about the hope of seeing our Saviour face to face (1 John 3:1-3).

A man who looked to the Lord Jesus and became a worshipper (John 9: 30-38)

In John's gospel we have a man that was born blind. He had never seen anything. There are so many things that we take for granted that we can see. Sadly, some can lose their sight. But this man had never seen anything; he had no picture to hold in his mind.

**All of us have
some impression
about what Jesus
means to us**

The Lord took him up and gave him his sight. The man did not know much about the Lord, except that it was "*a man called Jesus*" who had healed him. Yet even so he spoke about Him to others. I would encourage you to do

that. If you have learnt who Jesus is, that He is God's beloved Son, that He is your Saviour, your Redeemer, you can speak of Him. This man in John 9 gave an account of what had happened and he was cast out by the Jews. If you or I speak about the Lord Jesus we may find that we get rejected. People may get angry because it affects their conscience. The man in John 9 was cast out but the Lord Jesus took him up and gave him a marvellous revelation as to who He was – the Son of God.

This man, who had never seen anyone before, saw Jesus and it was revealed to him that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God. As a result he became a worshipper and did Him homage. You do not have to wait to become a worshipper. If you have trusted in the Saviour you can honour Him. All of us have some impression about what Jesus means to us, what He has done for us.

I love to think of what Peter said — it was unique to himself — he said, "*the originator of life ye slew*" (*Acts 3:15*). What an amazing thing that the One who had given life and breath to everything should have been slain. Our appreciation of Jesus surely is distinctive to each one of us and every one is needed to make up the company that will respond to Him for ever.

This man became a worshipper. That was the effect of looking at Jesus and I trust it will encourage us all to be amongst the worshippers. You do not have to wait until you are old to be able

to say wonderful things about Him. Everyone who has trusted in Him can speak of Him as *“my Redeemer”*, One who is risen from the dead, and can glorify His name.

You might say, ‘What is worship?’ Well, it is what springs from the heart in an answer of affection to the love of One who is so much greater than ourselves, the Son of God. As you go on as a Christian you may have other impressions about the Lord Jesus. The Lord has many titles in Scripture. An older Christian I knew used to speak of there being well over 100 titles of the Lord Jesus. I cannot remember them all, but as we go on we grow in our appreciation of the Lord Jesus and can speak more fully about Him. But the start is, having looked at Jesus, to become a worshipper.

Peter seeing the Lord’s look and being adjusted by it

(Luke 22:54-62)

This section of Luke speaks about Peter and what he did. Over the centuries Christians have spent countless hours talking about Peter and his weakness and his failures. Now, I do not suppose that any one loved the Lord like Peter. He loved the Lord; he was prepared to go into the sea for the Lord (see John 21:7), he was prepared to follow the Lord, he was prepared to stand up and speak about the Lord to the very people that crucified Him. He loved the Lord.

But Peter, at this moment, acted in his own strength. I fear that I might try and do something for the Lord and do it in my own strength. Think about Samson; he is a sobering example in Scripture. It came to the moment when he lost his hair and the enemy came upon him: he thought he would go out as before but he did not realise that the Spirit of God had left him and he was just in his own strength, and that was no strength at all! Where we read, Peter followed the Lord because he loved Him but he found that he was not equal to the situation.

For myself, sometimes the Lord has had to look upon me in adjustment. The Lord says to Laodicea, *“I rebuke and discipline as many as I love”* (Revelation 3:19). Sometimes the Lord might have to speak to us about relying on our own strength. We live in

a culture that makes much of youth and strength and vitality but the Bible tells us that *“Even the youths shall faint and shall tire, and the young men shall stumble and fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...” (Isaiah 40:30-31.*

Do not attempt to do things for the Lord in your own strength. In actual fact, fellow believer, do not try to do anything in your own strength. About six months ago I had worked for a year to try and get some investment for the factory where I work. I got to a meeting and it was approved. Twelve hours later I was in an ambulance. Some of you have been in hospital and know how helpless you are. Wheeled around from here to there, they put tubes in you and all that. I was put in a room with a man who kept crying out, ‘Let me die, let me die’. Whilst I was lying on my back a colleague sent me a message saying, ‘The company you work for has been taken over’. The Lord can bring you right down. Do not rely on your own strength. Do not try to do things in your own strength. It is a challenge to us all.

The important thing in the passage we read was that the Lord was near enough for Peter to be able to see His eyes upon him. The Lord is with us: He has promised to be with us all the days (see Matthew 28:20). It is a promise we can rely on absolutely. We can be absolutely sure about the words of the Lord. He said, *“my words shall in no wise pass away” (Matthew 24:35).* Dear fellow-believer, you can be absolutely sure about the promises of the Lord but you need to have your own conviction and certainty about them in your heart. The Lord would help you with that.

Peter went forth and wept bitterly. How many of us here have wept bitterly, feeling that we have let the Lord down? But the Lord did not do this to make Peter miserable, He did it that he might be preserved and just a few days later the Lord appeared to him in resurrection (see Luke 24:34), then 50 days later Peter preached to the very people who had crucified Jesus.

Peter was preserved by the Lord looking at him. And while we are sitting here tonight the Lord might look at any one of us. Or something might come to us for our preservation or direction through what is said, or through the scriptures themselves, or the Holy Spirit speaking to us individually.

Dear friend, do not rely on your own strength, it will not be enough, and you will find yourself in a situation you are not equal to. This is a lesson that goes through our life, that we need to rely on Him and to do things in His strength. We are so weak, the devil is so active. He is as a roaring lion. Peter himself tells us, *“Your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). The language is so vivid. Peter knew from his own experience what he was talking about and that is why he tells believers in our day to cast our care upon Him (see 1 Peter 5:7).

Stephen, who saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God and whose spirit was affected by it (Acts 7:54-60)

Stephen’s martyrdom is a great mystery to me. Why should such a man be taken out of the way of the testimony like that? Why was the apostle James martyred so early? We do not understand God’s ways, not now. When we are together in heaven everything will be understood. But for the present, we have to leave it with God.

Well, Stephen spoke, as we see here, in the face of the most incredible opposition, bitterness and anger. As he was speaking the Lord gave him a view of Himself in glory, *“he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”* He was able to speak of what he saw, *“Lo, I behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God”* The reaction of those that heard him was to hold their ears and rush upon him and stone him. What a terrible way to die. Yet, he saw the heavens opened and he saw the Son of man. The Lord saw him, He saw the agony of Stephen. The Lord was standing. He knew what Stephen needed for that moment. Stephen had the most wonderful glimpse of the glory of Jesus as he turned his eyes toward heaven in a moment of extremity.

Stephen’s martyrdom is a great mystery to me!

Well, we might not be tested in this way. Thank God if we can live in a measure of peace. But, in difficulty look towards our Lord

Jesus Christ, where He is. It is the same Jesus, the same Person, the same One who loves your soul, the One who gave Himself for you. He lives for you now and He is waiting for you, and, glorious promise, He is coming for you and me, praise be His name.

Stephen committed his spirit to the Lord—but he said something very wonderful as well: *“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”*. What a wonderful spirit he showed in the face of opposition. Having seen Jesus he was marked by the same spirit as marked the Lord. Think of the Lord’s words on the cross, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34)*. There was an answer to that; those who believed at Pentecost and many others who formed part of the early church at Jerusalem would have seen Jesus on the cross.

Now, there was an answer to this prayer of Stephen. A man called Saul was there and he was consenting to Stephen being stoned. Think of that, he was consenting, holding the clothes of those throwing the stones.. He saw what happened. Not very long after Saul was changed; he believed and became Paul, the apostle, one who had a most marvellous love for the Lord Jesus and we see his witness in the Scripture.

Under pressure Stephen was like the Lord, *“when reviled, reviled not again” (1 Peter 2:23)*. He saw the Lord and I think it would encourage us for we live in a day when there is great opposition to being a Christian. We used to live in a country that broadly held Christian values, but today there is an attack on what is Christian, on family life and marriage and all kinds of things. We need to be marked by the right spirit in dealing with it. The Lord is in glory. His power is the same. He knows everything. He knows what it is like to live a life here, sin apart. The Lord knows everything. You think of the experiences of life: the Lord knows about it and He can sympathise with us and be with us in them. But the spirit of Stephen was right, *“Lay not this sin to their charge”*. I trust we might be marked by the same spirit.

Especially when we are young we find our faith challenged by people who have all kinds of clever arguments against the Bible and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great thing in such

circumstances to fall back on what we know. That is what the man in John chapter 9 did; he said, *“One thing I know, that, being blind before, now I see”*. There was nothing that could change that, he was certain of it. If you have trusted in the Lord, whatever people say, nothing is going to alter it—you know that you have been changed, as the hymn says:-

*What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!*

Cling to what you know, cling to what you have found of the Lord for yourself and then you will be able to act in the right spirit.

Stephen is a great example to us. He saw Jesus and his spirit was right as a result. May we look to Jesus as well, that our spirit may be right when confronting difficulty and contrariety.

The Hebrew Christians who were exhorted to look to Jesus so they might be helped in endurance (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Stephen’s life here in testimony was short; he was a martyr, he was someone who gave up his life for his Saviour. But this Scripture speaks about endurance. The writer to the Hebrews speaks about those who have gone before and says they were *“a cloud of witnesses”*. A cloud is made up of countless drops of water. There is a tremendous heritage for us in those believers who have gone before. They have left a witness. What about us in our day? What are we doing to sustain the testimony and to be lights in the world? The answer is looking off unto Jesus; looking on Him in the glory. He is at God’s right hand and He is waiting to come to call all His own to be with Him for ever. He is coming soon.

We read, *“laying aside every weight, and sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race ...”* There are sprints, there are shorter races and there are longer races. For some believers the time of testimony may be a short period but for others it may be long. Helen Lemmel, who I mentioned at the beginning, lived 97 years, most of those spent serving the Lord.

How are we going to be sustained in the joy of the Lord? It is looking steadfastly, continually at Jesus the leader and completer of faith. He is the completer of faith. He is the One who will see

us through until there is no more need of faith. When we are taken or taken up to the glory there will not be any more need of faith.

He is the completer of faith. He went into death and He rose again. There was joy lying before Him, the joy of being in the Father's presence, the joy too, dear friend, of you and I putting our trust in Him and becoming part of a company that belongs to Him and will honour and worship Him for ever.

We have thought about what the effect of looking at Jesus is. Now, the last verse of Helen Lemmel's hymn is:

*His Word shall not fail you – He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!*

If you have seen Jesus, tell others. They need Him. They need the Lord Jesus as much as you did before you turned to Him. Go out to them: the world is dying, "the world is passing", John tells us, "*the world is passing, and its lust, but he that does the will of God abides for eternity*" (1 John 2:17). What is the will of God now? Well, it is many things but one thing is to be able to proclaim and speak about the Lord Jesus.

You might not be able to do it in a public way but show by your manner of life and your godly conversation, show them something that is better. Live a life so that others ask 'What is it that this other person has that I have not got?' Then the Spirit can speak to them and bring conviction of sin and need. And the answer to that need is the Saviour.

I would encourage us all to look at Jesus. We need endurance. It is not a 100 metre sprint; it is a marathon — 26 gruelling miles. What will sustain us in the race and sustain us to the end? It is seeing the Lord where He is and knowing that He is our Saviour, that He is glorified, that He is at God's right hand and that He knows what we need for the journey. At the end of Matthew's Gospel the disciples were very anxious and the Lord said to them, "*behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the*

age" (*Matthew 28:20*). He is with us for the whole journey, for the whole race. Run it with endurance!

**John's word about the hope of seeing our Saviour face to face
(1 John 3:1-3).**

John wrote here, about something that amazed him; he writes, *"See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God" (1 John 3:1)*; that is the character of love that the Father has given to us. One thing that I worry about in my own soul is that I cease to be amazed at God's love for us. Let us not take the things of God for granted. Let them not become so familiar that they do not bring a joy and a spring in your heart. How wonderful it is that we are put in a relationship with the eternal God and we should become His children.

John also says that the world does not know us. The world talks about Christians but it does not really understand what they are. Then John tells us here that, *"what we shall be has not yet been manifested"*, but, *"we shall be like him, for we will see him as he is" (1 John 3:2)*.

J.N. Darby wrote, 'Like Jesus, grace supreme'. Wonderful grace – a miracle of God's grace that we shall one day be like His Son. Think of it. We have been taken up, redeemed with the intention that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. We shall be like Him and we shall see Him as He is. It is a wonderful hope and John says that if we have that hope we purify ourselves. (see 1 John 3:3). It has an effect on us in the way we live our lives. The Lord is coming; we shall hear His shout and the Lord says, *"and they that have heard shall live" (John 5:25)*. Those who have fallen asleep, down the centuries, they will hear His voice and *"shall live"*. And we will be gathered up and we will be with Him, in the presence of the Lord.

We will see Him. Think about it. There are many things in Scripture that you can understand simply and straightaway in one sense. There are other things that need to be meditated upon and thought about and prayed about to get an understanding of what they mean. It is wonderful to me that I will see the Saviour face to face. It is a wonderful hope.

May the hope of seeing the Lord sustain us and as we each think about it may we honour Him, worship Him and glorify His name. For His name's sake. Amen.

Simon Burr

An address at Hampton, 17th March 2012

From "Living Water" 17

THE LORD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOD

Think of what the Lord Jesus was first of all Godward, how He was cast upon God from the womb. *"I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly"* (Psalm 22:10). Then as a boy of twelve He was occupied in His Father's business, as a young Man of thirty years of age, about to go into the service of His God and Father, He said, *"...thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). In His path of service He could say, *"I do always the things that are pleasing to him"* (John 8:29). Everything that a man should be according to God was seen in the life of Jesus. In Gethsemane (meaning oil press) before going on to the cross and, recoiling from the awful transaction that lay ahead, He says, *"Not my will, but thine be done"* (Luke 22:42).

He always thought of His Father. He was always pleasing to Him. He said, *"I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love"* (John 15:10). The Lord was perfect towards His God.

Ken Hollands

An extract from an address at Croydon, March 1996.

This extract was selected for reprinting from "Living Water" No 17 by Brian Mair.

God willing, in issue No 118 there will be a reprint from "Living Water" No 18 selected by Louisa Painter.

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 Section

HE WAS THERE

*Jesus heard when you prayed last night; He spoke to His Father of you;
Jesus was there when you fought that fight; He is going to bring you through.
Jesus knew when you shed those tears but you did not weep alone;
For the burden you thought too heavy to bear He made His very own.
Jesus Himself was touched by that trial, which you could not understand.
Jesus stood by as you almost fell and lovingly grasped your hand.
Jesus cared when you bore that pain, indeed, He bore it too;
He felt each pang and ache in your heart because of His love for you.
Jesus was grieved when you doubted His love. But He gave you grace to go on;
Jesus rejoiced as you trusted Him the only trustworthy One.
His presence shall ever be with you, no need to be anxious or fret;
Blessed Lord! He is there all the time; He has never forsaken you yet.*

Nell Hawkins

EVERY-DAY CHEER FOR THE REST OF THE ROAD

*We have nothing to fear though the journey be long,
Though our weakness is great and our enemies strong,
There is nothing to fear, perfect love claims the right
To direct us by day and defend us by night..
He knoweth our frame, counts it nothing but dust;
But calls us by name and delights in our trust.
He sees all that is future, understands all that is past,
And knows how much longer the journey will last.
For our comfort He'll care every step of the road,
Till His glory we share in the house of our God,*

*Though some of His ways may seem past finding out
The thought of His love must exclude every doubt.
These mysteries when solved in His presence above,
Will but add further charms to the story of love.*

George Cutting

Testimony Section

A PRAYER ANSWERED AFTER SIXTY-TWO YEARS!

Tom John was born in a Welsh mining village and along with his twin brother attended services in a Welsh chapel, three times on Sunday, plus other services through the week. Tom grew up and moved to Swansea for work. Here he met Eira whom he later married. Eira was a believer who had trusted the Lord when she was eighteen. Tom was given a Bible by Eira's mother and he carried this with him for many years, generally reading it each day.

Despite this reading and even though Tom's youngest son came to trust in Jesus as his own Saviour, Tom still did not have the assurance of forgiveness and life in Christ.

In June 1986 Tom was rushed into hospital after his first heart attack. Just a few years later in 2004 Tom had another attack and an emergency operation was performed. Doctors warned him and the family that it was 'touch and go'. It was an anxious time for the family but at last Tom was in a frame of mind to listen to how God was speaking to him. For sixty-two years Eira had prayed for Tom's salvation – many more had prayed for this as well and the time was about to come when the prayers would be answered.

The great day in Tom's life was 10th June 2004 when, lying in his hospital bed he picked up his Bible and read:

"I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity I have not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Psalm 32:5

Weighed down by the knowledge that he was one of the guilty sinners that Jesus had died on the cross to save, Tom sought His forgiveness and received a 'pardon' in return. The salvation he sought was now his – no one could ever take it away. Having given his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, a wonderful joy filled Tom's heart, and a sense that a huge weight had been lifted from him.

On being discharged from the hospital later that day, Tom shared the good news with his family and friends. As Tom put it:

- 'There were tears of joy in our home,
- Rejoicing in heaven, and
- I wanted to tell the world of my salvation.'

On 16th June 2004, at the age of eighty-nine, Tom was baptised and he takes every opportunity to tell others of his Saviour. How ever old you are, it is not too late in life to trust in Christ. Tom only wishes that he has come to the Saviour earlier in His life. As for Eira, she has the joy of seeing Tom grow in the knowledge of God and rejoices that after so many years she has had an answer to her prayers.

Tom and Eira John

This testimony was provided by Brian Parr and I am grateful to Mr John (now 97) for permission to print it here. Ed.

SALVATION IN A BUENOS AIRES' PRISON

Maria del Rosario has been in the prison since we began visiting the prison. She always claimed to be a devout Roman Catholic but, even so, often asked me, 'What is the difference between Roman Catholics and the kind of Christians that you are?'

After she heard that Jesus Himself had done all the work of salvation by His perfect sacrifice once for all, one of her big questions was: 'Don't we have to do good works as well?'. Several times she was shown the passage in Ephesians: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9) and we prayed that the Holy Spirit would make this good to her.

At our last visit Maria said that she had something to tell me. She said, 'Last night I got right with God, and got a white record. I confessed all my sins to God and asked Him to forgive me; I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and, look, I can now walk well!' With that she got up and walked up and down the room, something she has found great difficulty with in recent times. Maria continued: 'Now I can rest in peace knowing that Jesus did all that was necessary. He has washed me in His blood, shed for sinners, shed for murderers, including me, and there is nothing that I can do for my salvation, much less pray to the Virgin or any of the saints as I was taught to do! I am very happy now that I know my Saviour and that He loves me and will help me always. I now like to sing with new feelings – 'Jesus Christ is passing by'; and when He passes everything is changed, sorrows flee away and only joy remains!'

It was such a joy to know she trusted in the Lord Jesus as her Saviour and had been set free from all her Roman Catholic idolatry. Maria has asked for prayers since she does not find it easy to be a Christian in the prison.

Eileen Garvie

Robin and Eileen Garvie regularly visit a prison near to them in Buenos Aires – Robin seeing the men and Eileen the women.

A voice from the past

MERCY LEADING ON TO GLORY

"The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he has often refreshed me...the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord in that day... (2 Timothy 1:16-18)

It is interesting that Paul asks for present mercy for the house of Onesiphorus, but as to Onesiphorus himself, "*The Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord in that day*". That is the day when everything comes to light; we should not naturally have thought of mercy in that day. It indicates that in regard to what is connected with responsibility the thought of mercy goes right through to the judgment-seat of Christ. I think when we get

there we shall feel in our souls that whatever the Lord commends and approves, or any crown of righteousness He gives, is all mercy. Paul said, "*having received mercy of the Lord to be faithful*" (1 Corinthians 7:25). If any of us are a little more faithful than others it is mercy.

*How shall I meet those eyes?
Mine eyes on Him I'll cast,
And own myself the Saviour's prize,
Mercy from first to last.*

That is how I shall stand at the judgment-seat of Christ.

Possibly Onesiphorus was no longer here, his pathway of testimony was over, and so Paul's desire for mercy in the present is for his house, but as to Onesiphorus himself, he looks for mercy in that day. We shall have to come back at the judgment-seat of Christ, if never before, to the thought of pure mercy.

C. A. Coates (1862-1945)

A word for today

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIANS

Matthew 25:1-30

In the different gospels you get different groups of incidents, so you cannot put the four gospels exactly side by side. You get certain parables that are only recorded in one gospel. In Luke you get:

- the parable of the debtor and the creditor in chapter 7 (verses 36-50),
- the good Samaritan in chapter 10 (verses 30-37), and
- the prodigal son in chapter 15 (verses 11-24).

These are to illustrate the truth that is peculiar to Luke. You get grace, mercy and love in these parables. In Luke you do not get the side of our responsibility but that of the grace of God. In the good Samaritan we see One who came to minister to man. So

what we see there is the mercy of God, mercy coming in efficiently as regards man; you do not see there the responsibility of man. In the case of Simon and the parable of the two debtors, both were unable to pay and both were frankly forgiven; you see there a beautiful picture of the grace of God. So also in the parable of the prodigal son, you see the love of the Father coming out; the moment there is any movement in the son, then you get the Father running. It is really the love of God shown out. The coming out of God in grace, mercy, and love to man is seen in Luke's gospel.

The responsibility side comes out in the parables that are only given in Matthew:

- we see the unmerciful servant in chapter 18 (verses 21-35),
- a king who made a wedding feast for his son in chapter 22 (verses 1-14), and
- we have the ten virgins in chapter 25 (verses 1-13).

These three are unique to Matthew and each of them takes up the responsibility of those who claim to have been affected by the truth. In chapter 18 the servant says, *"Pay me what thou owest"*; grace had been shown to him, but grace had not affected him. Then in chapter 22 you get the man at the wedding feast without the wedding garment; he was not suitable to the occasion. In chapter 25 we read of the ten virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom, but only five were real.

We see how wisely things are placed in the Scriptures. Each of these parables in Matthew is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven; this is not so in the three parables referred to in Luke. The kingdom of heaven consists of all who claim to be Christians on earth, people who take the ground of being Christians and as such claim to be under the rule of heaven, and if they take that ground then there is the responsibility with them to answer to it.

As to chapter 22, at a marriage feast you are supposed to be suitable to the occasion and not being so was really an insult to the king. The man without a wedding garment presents a picture of a flippant person who has taken up the profession of Christianity in a light way. If you take it up at all you profess to have come into the light and under the rule of heaven; your ways ought to be

in keeping with this. If I am not, then I have not got the wedding garment on.

In chapter 23 the Bridegroom is presented, the One who is coming – Christ. When He was here He spoke of Himself as the Bridegroom; now He is gone, but He is coming again. This is a point of vital importance, especially for one who makes the claim of being a Christian. The Bridegroom is Christ. All awaits the coming of the Bridegroom, and the ten virgins went out to meet Him.

You cannot connect Christ with the present order of things; all connection is broken between Christ and things down here. You cannot connect Him with the lust of the flesh, the pride of life and the things that characterise the world down here. You must therefore *“go forth to meet Him”*. You must in spirit leave the present order of things if you are going to meet Him. This is really to be seen in such a book as Bunyan’s ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’, where the pilgrim turns his back on the City of Destruction, and may be said to go forth to meet the Bridegroom.

We all take that ground of having gone forth to meet Him; we must see therefore that we have things suitable to it. The wise were prepared, the foolish were not. The point for us is, ‘Are we prepared?’ Christ has accomplished all and He is coming; there is therefore no reason why you should not be prepared. Are you in keeping with what is presented to you? The foolish virgins were not; they were mere professors, and mere profession will not do. Claims may be made without any moral condition to support them. God is not taken in by profession, moral condition is necessary. It is most important that Christ should be a reality to you. Christ should be as great a reality as the sun in heaven; if that is not the case then you are in darkness or lawless. Is He a reality to you? Have you concerned yourself to find out much about Him?

You take the ground of being a Christian, but have you given close attention to Christ to see what He is? Scientists have taken the greatest diligence to find out what are the component parts of light; surely then it is of importance for you to find out all you can about Christ, the Sun of righteousness: there is enough in Him to engage your attention. What pains have you taken to know about

Christ was a reality to Paul

Christ? Where do you hear of Him? You need to believe in Him then you get the Holy Spirit, and then your moral condition will be suitable to your profession. You will be ready for the coming of the Bridegroom. In Luke 2 the Babe was presented as God's salvation. Simeon took Him up in his arms and says, "*Lord now thou lettest thy bondman go ... in peace*" (Luke 2:29). He says, in effect, 'I am content to go now'. Simeon was in keeping with the occasion. When the Lord was about to die, Mary had the box of ointment ready (see John 12:3); she was in keeping with the occasion. Again in Acts we see the instance of Paul: he saw Christ in glory and said, "*What shall I do, Lord?*" (Acts 22:10). When leaving this scene, although he had to say that all had forsaken him, yet he could testify that the Lord stood by him, and he could look forward confidently to the crown of righteousness that the Lord would give to him, and not only to him but to all those who love His appearing (see 2 Timothy 4). He was thus in keeping with the occasion. He asked the question, "*What shall I do, Lord?*" and he was told what to do. You ought to raise that question and to expect an answer. If you really ask the question you will get the answer as Paul did. Christ was a reality to Paul. He was a reality to Simeon and a reality to Mary of Bethany.

We are all here in the profession of Christianity; you have taken the ground of having gone forth to meet the Bridegroom - you must then be in keeping with your profession. Then Christ will be a reality to you - a living Christ at the right hand of God. When He is a reality to you then He gives you the living water - the gift of the Holy Spirit. That will not fail you at the critical moment. What a terrible thing for Him to say to those foolish virgins, "*I do not know you*" (Matthew 25:12) and yet He will say it to many who have professed to know Him for years. Each one of you should enquire, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

F. E. Raven
Scarborough, August 1902