

123

Living Water

'Living Water' is published by the Stone Publishing Trust (Registered Charity 1034689)

'The Eagles', Headcorn Road, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BU

If you know of any one who might be interested in receiving this magazine, please pass their name and address to the Stone Publishing Trust. Copies of the next few issues will be sent to them free of charge.

Correspondents in the UK are welcome to use the Freepost address:–

Stone Publishing Trust,
FREEPOST TN3448,
Staplehurst,
TONBRIDGE, Kent, TN12 0BR

Quotations from the Bible in 'Living Water' are normally from the Darby translation or from the Authorised (King James) Version.

The permission of the Editor should be obtained before reproducing material contained in this magazine. It is the policy of the Trustees to encourage the use of articles for the work of the Lord wherever this is possible so long as it does not infringe the rights of others.

Articles are sometimes shortened or otherwise amended and for this the Editor takes full responsibility.

Editor: Mark Lemon

Picture: Scotney Castle, Kent. David E Mutton

Printed by Lakeside Printing,
Unit 4A, Munday Industrial Estate, Morley Rd, Tonbridge, TN9 1RA, UK

LIVING WATER 123

(May – June 2014)

Page

Recent Ministry

WITH CHRIST, IN CHRIST AND LIKE CHRIST <i>A Word at a burial, December 2013</i>	Phil Coldrick	1
--	---------------	----------

Poetry Selection

THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD	James Montgomery	4
THOU ART WORTHY	S. P. Tregelles	4
THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE	Arthur Pierson	5

Testimony Section

THE OVER-RULING HAND OF GOD	Crystal McLoughlin	6
-----------------------------	--------------------	----------

A voice from the past

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SALVATION <i>Extracted from "The Sinner's Friend"</i>	John Vine Hall	13
---	----------------	-----------

From "Living Water" No 23

THE DANGER OF LEGALITY <i>Continuing the series of reprints from the early issues of the Magazine. This article was selected by Keith Wickens.</i>	A. P. C. Lawrence	14
---	-------------------	-----------

A word for today

THREE PARTIALLY FULFILLED PROPHECIES <i>An address at Woking, 8th December 2012</i>	Ken Hollands	16
---	--------------	-----------

Recent Ministry

WITH CHRIST, IN CHRIST AND LIKE CHRIST

“...being with Christ, for it is very much better”

(Philippians 1:23).

“For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision; but new creation”

(Galatians 6:15).

“Beloved, now are we children of God, and what we shall be has not yet been manifested; we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is”

(1 John 3:2).

There is no easy way to face the loss of a loved one and I would not seek to minimise the grief and the sorrow that is associated with it. But we have been singing in our hymns of the Lord Jesus and if there is One Person who can make a difference to this time and to death itself it is the Lord Jesus.

I want to speak very simply of three things:

- Being with Christ,
- Being in Christ, and
- Being like Christ.

“Being with Christ”.

I start with that because that is the wonderful position of the dear sister we are about to bury. Her body might be here but her spirit is *“with Christ”*. The apostle Paul said that is *“very much better”*. As Christians we know that is so. I know, too, for Mrs W.... — who for a very long time has not been able to be physically present with the believers with whom she shared Christian fellowship — that it is very much better for her! It makes such a difference to this occasion to know that her spirit is *“with Christ”*.

Being in Christ

Long before she reached the point of being with Christ she was *“in Christ”*. That happened at the moment when she gave herself to the Lord Jesus and accepted Him as her Saviour. The Scripture

that I read in Galatians just refers to being *"in Christ Jesus"* and it says that it is a *"new creation"*. It is a wonderful thing to appreciate and to know that as believers in the Lord Jesus we are a *"new creation"*. It is something that God has created in us — it is His work—and it is as we are in Christ that we are a new creation; that is something that will never change. Not even death itself can affect it. That marks our sister; there is a new creation that exists for ever. Already she is with Christ: she is not only in Christ but she is with Him. In one sense that is something special to her today; many of us here are in Christ but we are not yet with Christ.

We are in Christ if we know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. What does it really mean to be *"in Christ"*? Well, the apostle Paul is writing to Jews so he refers to something that was characteristic of the Jew and that is the matter of circumcision; I do not want to talk about that save to say that the position of being in Christ Jesus is nothing to do with an outward religious position at all. Being in church does not make you in Christ but knowing the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour is what really makes us *"in Christ"*. It means that we trust in Him, believe in Him, and know who He is — the glorious Son of God who came here to die for us. As a result of His death we can face this occasion in an entirely different way from how a person who is not in Christ would face it.

It is a wonderfully blessed thing for us to know that we are in Christ, and that not even death itself can separate us from the love of God which we know in Jesus, our Saviour and Lord.

Being like Christ

Finally, in John's epistle, we have something else: being *"like Christ"*. That is something that is in the future. It is in the future for all who believe. Even now we can become more like Him as we love Him and as we let Him have a greater place in our lives. His presence will have a transforming effect upon us and one that others will be able to take account of. As I look back over my times of conversation with our sister I can see how being like

Christ is something that develops with us through our experiences. Yet we will never reach that ultimate goal until the day when we see Him. As this Scripture so wonderfully puts it, *"Beloved, now are we children of God"*, that is a consequence of us being in Christ, *"and what we shall be has not yet been manifested"*; we do not know what it is like; it is something too wonderful even to try and attempt to describe. But it does say this, *"we know that if it is manifested we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"*.

What a wonderful hope that is. We have already sung of that hope in our first hymn: 'When peace like a river attendeth my way'. The writer of that hymn could say, 'The sky, not the grave, is our goal'. That is the wonderful hope that all believers have.

I just want to leave those three impressions with us today because the Lord Jesus makes such a difference:

- For our sister, she is with Him.
- For us the question is, Are we in Christ Jesus today?
- Finally, do we have the hope in our hearts that we shall be like Him?

May we be encouraged: it is a difficult time but the Lord Jesus will make the difference. Draw near to Him and He will draw near to you. May we know something of His love and comfort today.

Phil Coldrick,
Word at a burial at Hampton, 8th December 2013

Poetry Selection

THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD

Thy body, given for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
The cup of blessing I will take,
And thus remember Thee.

Can I Gethsemane forget?
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember Thee?

When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice,
I must remember Thee:

Remember Thee, and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember Thee.

James Montgomery (1771 – 1854)

THOU ART WORTHY

Holy Saviour, we adore Thee,
Seated on the Father's throne,
While the heavenly hosts before Thee
Gladly sound Thy praise abroad –
Thou art worthy!
We are ransomed by Thy blood.

Saviour, though the world despised Thee,
Though Thou here wast crucified,
High the Father's glory raised Thee,
Lord of all creation wide –
 Thou art worthy!
We now live, for Thou hast died.

Haste the day of Thy returning
With Thy ransomed saints to reign;
Then shall end the days of mourning,
We shall sing with rapture then –
 “Thou art worthy!”
Come, Lord Jesus, come, Amen.

S. P. Tregelles (1813 - '1875)

THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE

The gospel of Thy grace, my stubborn heart has won;
For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son.
That *Whosoever will believe shall everlasting life receive.*

The soul that sinneth dies, my awful doom I heard;
I was for ever lost, but for Thy gracious word
That *Whosoever will believe shall everlasting life receive.*

Not to condemn the world the Man of Sorrows came
But that the world might have salvation through His name,
For *Whosoever will believe shall everlasting life receive.*

Lord, help my unbelief! Give me the peace of faith,
To rest with child-like trust on what Thy gospel saith
That *Whosoever will believe shall everlasting life receive.*

Arthur Pierson (1837 – 1911)

Testimony Section

THE OVER-RULING HAND OF GOD

I was born into a Roman Catholic family in Kilkeel in Northern Ireland. There were six boys and myself. As you can imagine, with seven children our home was a very busy one. Dad was a fisherman and was away a lot. When we knew dad was coming home we always behaved because he brought us sweets and things like that. Since mum was at home a lot of the time on her own, she needed time with the children out of the house so on a Wednesday evening each week we were all bundled into a minibus and taken to the "Good News Club", where the gospel was preached to about thirty children from various Catholic homes in Kilkeel.

I was only about four years old so I do not remember much about what we heard but I do remember learning the song, "One, Two, Three, Jesus loves me" and another song, "I want to give my life to Jesus". These were the first songs I learned as a young child.

In our home there were always fights and arguments. In 2000/2001 mum and dad's marriage began to break up. When dad came home there were always rows. Then there came a time when dad had to move out of the home and mum and we children moved to Cranfield. Dad was not allowed any contact with us.

On the evening of the 3rd June 2001 our lives changed dramatically. Dad came home from the fishing and walked to Cranfield. Mum was bathing the two boys. I was told not to go outside but being a six-year old I took no notice and went outside. In that time of me going outside to play my dad came into the home. He went upstairs, got the two boys out of the bath, made sure they were out of the house and then he set the house on fire. That fire took my mum's life and his life as well.

I remember the two boys being sent out of the house by dad. They had no clothes on; I had to go to the washing line to get clothes to put around them. That evening our lives were turned upside down. In the weeks that followed I was sent from one house to another and eventually ended up in Kilkeel where my mum's brother opened up his house for the two boys and me. He

was in a relationship at the time; the other children in the house were not his and that was very difficult for us. Eventually the boys were taken to foster homes but I was left with my uncle. I was fortunate in that for it brought a kind of stability into my life which was not known by my brothers. The younger one, for instance, had over thirty-three foster homes in twelve years.

I went to school in St Columba's College in Kilkeel in first year. When I went in I saw a group of girls, who looked like my kind of girls. I got to know them and the teachers soon got to know us because in every classroom that we went into we caused mayhem. I was the ringleader of the group. I always told them what to do thinking that I would not get into trouble. But the teachers always knew that I was telling them what to do.

I have school report forms and they remind me of what I was like before God's grace entered into my life. A student teacher said that I made her feel victimised in her own classroom. That is the kind of person I was, always in the Principal's office for all the wrong reasons, always in trouble.

One evening in Kilkeel High Street a man asked me if I would come to his Wednesday children's meeting. I laughed at him but the next day at school I got the girls together and suggested that we went as a group and did our best to wreck the meeting.

On the next Wednesday evening with the rest of the gang I got into the same kind of minibus that I had got into eleven years before when I was four years old. It just shows God's sovereign hand and how He links everything together. These people had not seen me or heard of me in years but I got onto this minibus and came to the children's meeting. I sat in the very back row as did all the girls with me. And we did cause mayhem in that children's meeting. We threw chairs; we interrupted and misbehaved in every way.

One evening Dennis, the leader, and his wife, Hazel, came down to the back and spoke to me. I was so cheeky to Hazel that night. One of my friends that same night lifted a chair and threw it at Dennis. Because of that he came over to me at the end and he spoke to me harshly. Then he said, 'I want you to come back next week but the girls cannot continue'. I wondered why this man wanted me back after what I had said to his wife. I could never

I came into an environment where I felt I was loved.

understand that act of love that he showed me that night.

I went home and thought about it. I had seen something different in these people. I asked myself, 'Why are these people taking time out of their Wednesday evening to come and take cheek off of someone like

me?' The choice was either to go back to the children's meeting or to stay with the girls. In the end I decided to go back to the children's meeting because of that act of love expressed by Dennis. I went back but I did not tell the girls because it would not have seemed cool any more!

I went and instead of sitting in the back row sat on the front row. I made a decision that evening to listen to what these people were saying. They told me that there was a Man in heaven that loved me, that God sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for somebody like me. Being a child that did not get shown much love when I was growing up, having my dad do what he did, I was amazed that there could be Someone in heaven who loved me. Week by week I went back hearing more about God as revealed in Jesus. I started to read the Bible in earnest. I read John 3:16 and as I read I was overwhelmed by the love of God. But I never did anything about it. My behaviour in school was still not good and I was always known to the teachers for all the wrong reasons.

One Wednesday after the children's meeting, Dennis asked me to come to the gospel service in the hall. I came into an environment where people actually cared for me and I felt I was loved. I went to that gospel meeting week by week, learning more about God, and Calvary, learning more about sin and about the state of my life without God.

On 20th January 2008 I came to the meeting and I knew that something was going to change. A man was sharing his testimony but the first song we sang was, *Heartaches, broken pieces, ruined lives, is why Jesus died*. That was my life described in a nutshell. My life was broken, there were heartaches, and there were broken pieces. That song made me think a lot about my life.

The speaker told us how he got saved years ago in Belfast. The preacher had spoken about heaven and hell and told him that if he

died that night without Jesus then he would be going to a lost eternity called hell. I had heard this before but something was different that night because God brought back to my memory how my mum and dad spent the last minutes of their life engulfed in flames. Here was someone telling me that if I did not get my life right with God that is what I was facing for ever. God made me feel very uncomfortable with what the speaker was saying.

I went home and I started reading my Bible, then I asked God; 'God, if you are real, come into this broken life, take all the broken pieces, all the hurts, all the heartaches of this life and put them back together'. Then I asked God to come into my life and to save me. That was on 20th January 2008 and that is the night that I became a child of God. It is amazing how God had His hand on my life right from four years old in that children's meeting, when I was six, when dad set the house on fire, and when I was 13 back in the same children's meeting.

God has changed so much in my life. I still go to the children's meeting on a Wednesday night but instead of sitting in the back throwing chairs and giving cheek I now stand at the front taking the cheek of the children and teaching them about God's word. It is great to be able to teach children and if there are any children's workers reading this, please never give up on a child. I was such a frustrating child when I was going to those meetings when I was thirteen. I was so cheeky but the leaders never, ever gave up on me and I have seen the love of God in their lives. So if you have any difficult children, persevere with them because you never know what God is doing behind-the-scenes.

Another thing that God has changed in my life is what it speaks of in Romans chapter 8 verse 15, *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"*. Killeel people who knew my dad and know my history pity me. But they do not need to pity me anymore for though I have no mum and dad, I am a child of God. God has saved me by His grace and it is great to be a child of God but it is only by His grace that we can be children of God.

Another thing that God has changed is my behaviour. In school I was not very popular with the teachers. But I got saved and God started to change my attitude to my work. I can remember going in to school in fourth year to return some textbooks after the summer exams. I was walking through the school and the vice-principal asked me to go to his office. I had not been in his office for about two years and I knew I had done nothing wrong that day. I went into his office and he told me that I was to be Head Girl next year. I really could not believe it but it shows how much God had changed me. God is still changing me and other people can see that the change is real.

In 2010 I had to transfer to Kilkeel High School. It was a difficult time in my life. Home life was very difficult. One time after we had the meal in the fellowship followed by the gospel meeting and then around the organ, all the youths gathered round. I can remember standing round singing and I just asked God to do something different in my life that night. My uncle had hit alcohol very hard in recent months and home life was not very good at all.

Later that evening Dennis and Hazel took me home. I went into the kitchen and saw all the empty beer bottles and cans sitting there. Coming from a Christian environment where you are loved, where people have an interest in you and going into this very dark place where no one really cared about me was not very nice. I remember going around the house looking to see where everyone was. My uncle was in bed drunk and his fiancée was upstairs getting ready with her three friends to go out partying. Her three children were nowhere to be seen. I am not an emotional person but I just broke down that night and I went outside. It was lashing with rain and I sent Dennis a message asking if he could come and collect me. Dennis came and he took me to his home.

Hazel asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I just said, 'I want God to come and do something. I want to be in an environment where I feel loved'. Dennis and Hazel let me stay in their house that night. That was the last Sunday in August 2010. I am still staying in that house to this day. That shows you how God works.

My Social Worker came to see me on the Monday and during our discussion Dennis and Hazel offered to open up their home to me.

Being part of their family gave me a structure in my life which I had not had before

That was a great blessing from God. Being part of their family gave me a structure in my life which I had not had before. I never had the opportunity to go to a mum and say, 'Well mum, what about these shoes or what

about this coat'. I never had that and now I have it. I never had a dad that I could say, 'Dad would you go and please ask mum to change her mind?' Sometimes that works, sometimes it does not work. But it is great to be a part of the family.

If you are a young person reading this can I say, 'Really appreciate your mum and dad because I have only had a real mum and dad in my life for the last two and a half years. I do not know how I got through all of my life until now'. God has really blessed me with people who opened up their home. It is great to be a part of a family. Young people, when your mum and dad are nagging on just get through with it because you do not know what it would be like without them. You do not know what it would be like if they were gone.

I want to share one thing with you where I was really challenged. During a Scripture Union Training Session God raised an issue with me which I had tried to avoid. It was an issue of forgiveness for my dad. It was something I had struggled with before. I used to say, 'How can I forgive somebody who is not here?' and 'How can I forgive somebody that tore my family and my life to pieces?' I was wrestling with this matter and God was saying to me, 'Crystal, let it go'. God reminded me of all the things that He had forgiven in my life but I was still struggling to take this step. I remember looking up and seeing a text on the wall: "*My banner over you is love*". That night, only by the grace of God, I was able to forgive my dad.

Ever since I was able to forgive my dad God has opened up so many opportunities for me to serve Him. I was holding this thing in my life and stopping God from giving me all the blessings that He had for me. Even in my studies He has opened up so many doors. I did not think I would be studying social work next year.

There were over 3000 people applied and there were only 160 places and yet God opened a door for me to be able to do that next year. God has just been so good and I just pray for anyone in here tonight, anyone who is struggling with anything, nothing is too hard for Him. God is always there.

God has really burdened my heart for the lost through hearing the screams of my mum as the flames overwhelmed her

I have a relationship with God. He is my heavenly Father who has never left me. Those nights when I could not sleep, battling with different things, having flashbacks of things in the past, He never left me in those times. I know God can do so much for you because He has done so much for me. God reminded me of something in October. I was in a prayer meeting where people were praying for God to give us a burden for lost souls. I sat in that prayer meeting, thinking about the 3rd June 2001 - the evening that my mum and dad lost their lives. I always blame myself for opening that door and going outside. Being a six-year-old I ran back into the house because I wanted to see my mum. The firemen had to come and get me. God has really burdened my heart for the lost through hearing the screams of my mum as the flames overwhelmed her. That is what the unsaved are facing for eternity. I share that with you to burden your hearts for the lost in this land and for the lost in my family.

The two younger boys are grown up and into the things in the world, dealing in drugs, having children outside marriage, and not knowing what to do with their lives. I ask you really to pray for them because they need the Saviour. They need to be lifted from the hurt of the past. Maybe there are people in your own families like that as well. Never let go praying for them because God can move in times when we do not think anything is going on.

In conclusion, there is one verse I want to leave with you: *“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up” (Psalm 27:10).*

Crystal McLoughlin

A voice from the past

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SALVATION

“We know...that we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this we groan, ardently desiring to have put on our house which is from heaven”

2 Corinthians 5:1-2

It is a blessed thing to be found walking in the way of salvation, but it is an additional blessing to know it, and to have every doubt and every fear removed, so that we may continually press onward rejoicing in the Lord, our strength, our confidence and trust.

Well, my friend, this paper is written expressly for you, by one who has been many years travelling on the road to Zion, surrounded with distrusts and fears, lest he might possibly have mistaken the right path and at last come short of eternal glory.

How, then, do we know that we really have a building from God, a mansion prepared for us; — a dwelling into which we shall assuredly enter, and be for ever with the Lord? Do you groan in your earthly tabernacle on account of sin? Is sin really hateful to you? Would you part with it if you could? Is holiness to the Lord the yearning of your soul? What brings about this new sensation, so totally opposite to what you once experienced? Why, my friend, it is the earnest of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:4-5). You would never groan over sin, if you had not this blessed earnest of your future joy. Was it always so with you, as it is now? The renewed soul — and none else — will answer, No. This, then, my fellow-traveller to Zion, is a blessed life-giving proof that you are indeed a new creation, deeply interested in the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, and are become an heir of salvation.

Let this be for your comfort and consolation — that your very anxiety to know your state is an evidence of the Spirit of God working within you, whereby you may know assuredly that you are sealed and an heir with Christ. (Galatians 4:6-7). Take this for your comfort, and be thankful, remembering that God will

never leave nor forsake those to whom He has once shown His covenant (Psalm 89:27 & 34; Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6).

John Vine Hall (1821-1860)

Extracted from "The Sinner's Friend". In the next issue (DV): "Sanctification".

From "Living Water" No 23

THE DANGER OF LEGALITY

Galatians 5:1, 13-15 & 25-26, 6:1

Legality relates to the controlling and regulation of the flesh and we readily fall a prey to it. The epistle to the Galatians was written to a group of gatherings in Galatia, and this would indicate that there are certain areas that are more prone than others to legality. It is described in Acts 15, when the matter of circumcising the Gentiles was up for discussion. Peter standing up says, "*Now therefore why tempt ye God, by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers or we have been able to bear?*" (Acts 15:10). That is how legality works; binding matters are laid upon others. You hardly ever find a legal person hard upon himself, for persons who are legal in their outlook are usually very tolerant with themselves.

If a yoke is put upon the neck of the disciples it brings in a spirit of bondage. The apostle, in writing to the Galatians says, "*I am afraid of you*" (Galatians 4:11) and truly we can speak like that when a spirit of legality gets a hold in a Christian company. It displaces the Spirit of God. If we have been taken up and brought into the liberty that the Galatian epistle speaks about, then the word to us is, "*Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore and be not held again in a yoke of bondage*" (Galatians 5:1). He says further, "*for ye have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not turn liberty into an opportunity for the flesh*" (Galatians 5:13).

Persons who have a legal outlook will always tell you that, when you do away with regulation on the principle of law, what comes in is looseness. That just challenges the presence and power of the Spirit; the presence of the Spirit rightly understood does not

for a moment allow any opening for looseness. It is a question therefore of how we are held in subjection, either by legality, or by subjection to Christ in glory and to the Spirit here on earth. The teaching of Romans 8 shows us the power of the Spirit. It compares the mind of the flesh and the mind of the Spirit, and shows the way in which the Spirit can be relied upon to bring in all the power necessary to hold every one of us in perfect liberty in the gain of sonship. So we do not need to bring in legality. It simply brings in an element of bondage that in itself is unjust and cruel because it was the element among the Jews which crucified Christ.

They were fully exposed through their legal criticism when He went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day. How did He meet this spirit in them? He challenged them with the words: *“if ye had known what is: I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless”* (Matthew 12:7). God is not pleased with the condemning spirit sometimes found amongst believers. He is looking for a living, happy responsive people as the result of His own operations in bringing us into liberty.

The apostle brings forward over against legality the liberty of sonship. We have been brought into the wonderful position of sonship. We have liberty with God and with one another. That works out to great advantage in our localities. So in chapter 6 he says, *“Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted”* (Galatians 6:1).

It is no good going to see a person who has been taken in some fault if, in self-righteousness, I have the feeling in my heart that I would never do such a thing myself. Scripture says, *“let him who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12);* so if we are concerned with restoring a person, it is not in any legal or exacting spirit but as *“considering thyself lest thou also be tempted”*. The spirit of legality is replaced by the buoyant sustainability of liberty in sonship.. We bring in power and liberation. There is no suggestion of one or two spiritual persons forgiving the erring one. It is a question of restoring such a one, but it must be in a spirit of meekness.

As we come into the presence of the Father, the blessedness of

divine compassion towards us causes our hearts to overflow towards one another so that, if there is the slightest degree of repentance with any erring one, we do not self-righteously avoid them, but in priestly grace we seek to deepen the exercise with them so that full repentance may be brought in and the person may be restored. Scripture says, *“He that brings back a sinner for the error of his ways shall save a soul from death”* (James 5:20) – how delightful that is to God!

A. P. C. Lawrence

Extracted from an address at Coatbridge, 2nd January 1958.

This article was selected for reprinting from “Living Water” No 23 by Keith Wickens.

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.

A word for today

THREE PARTIALLY FULFILLED PROPHECIES

“The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah has anointed me to announce glad tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God” Isaiah 61:1-2.

“What man is he that desireth life, and loveth days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile; Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of Jehovah are on the righteous, and his ears are towards their cry; The face of Jehovah is against those that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth” Psalm 34:12-16.

“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy king cometh to thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from

Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off. And he shall speak peace unto the nations; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.” Zechariah 9:9-10.

I would like to speak this evening about three partially fulfilled prophecies.

- The passage in Isaiah 61 is probably familiar to most of us. Indeed it was read by our Lord Jesus Christ when He stood up in Nazareth on that memorable occasion on a Sabbath day. He found the place and He read this passage. But He did not read it all. He did not read, *“and the day of vengeance of our God”* because it was not then fulfilled. He said, after reading the first part of it, *“To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21)*. And I would like to speak a little about this passage in connection with the gospel and the spirit of the gospel.
- The second passage we read from Psalm 34 is quoted by the apostle Peter when he writes to believers who were scattered and suffering persecution. (1 Peter 3:10-12). He quotes several verses; 12, 13, 14, 15 and the first part of verse 16 that says, *“...the face of the Lord is against them that do evil”*. Peter does not quote, *“to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”* because that would not have been appropriate in the Christian era. It will be appropriate when Jesus comes to reign, when, *“the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed”(Isaiah 65:20)*, but it was not appropriate for the Christian era. I would like to speak about Peter’s wise words for believers at the present time.
- And finally, both Matthew and John refer to Zechariah chapter 9 when they describe Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. They quote the fulfilment of verse nine, *“... thy King cometh to thee...”*, but they do not quote verse 10 since it is not yet fulfilled. I would like to speak about that passage in relation to Israel and the world.

To start with I would like to say a little about prophecy. When I was young I was not encouraged to read about prophecy, but rather concentrate on applications of scripture. It was felt, perhaps, that everything had been made clear about prophecy and there

was no need for anybody like me to delve into it too deeply.

On reflection I now consider that understanding prophecy is very important. We should endeavour to see God's 'big picture', yet not to be occupied unduly with dates and events. The Bible says clearly that, *"the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus"* (Revelation 19:10). The whole of prophecy centres on Christ. The gospel message centres in Jesus. The truth of the church centres in Jesus because He is the head of the church, the assembly.

God intends that believers should be intelligent about what is going to happen. It says in Ephesians that God has, *"made known to us the mystery of his will ... to head up all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth"* (Ephesians 1:9,10). Around 1830 as a result of godly enquiry the Spirit of God helped many believers to understand the difference in God's plan between what is in the heavens and what is upon the earth, to see that the hope of the church, the assembly, centres in heaven and there is a heavenly family that God is forming today. He is taking out from the nations a people for His name and forming a heavenly family that will be the bride of Christ (see Acts 15:14 and Revelation 21:9)

But God also intends to head up the things on the earth in Christ. These things on the earth all relate to Israel and centre in Jerusalem. God intends us to be intelligent about these things. I would commend especially to you the eleven lectures by J N Darby, given in Geneva in 1840. (JND Collected Writings Prophetic No 1; 'The Hopes of the Church'). I consider they are very readable lectures and can be used by God to help us to understand the scope of prophecy.¹

In all matters of doctrine there is a need for every generation not just to accept blindly what has been said by others in times past but to search out and be confirmed in Christian doctrine, including prophecy, from the scriptures. I commend this activity to everyone here and particularly to those who are younger, whose brains are active and who have the hearts and minds to look into these things as set out in the Bible.

¹J. N. Darby 'Collected Writings' Volume 2 (Available from the Stone Publishing Trust: £3.00)

Tonight I am going to restrict myself to these three interesting scriptures.

The Gospel and the spirit of the Gospel (Isaiah 61:1-2)

The first in Isaiah 61, as I have said already, was read by our

Lord in Nazareth when He stood up to read. As I have looked at it carefully, I find it amazing where He broke off. In chapter 61, there are a number of phrases beginning with the word "to". *"The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah hath anointed me to announce ... to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, ... to comfort all that mourn"* and I might have thought that logically you should keep all the other statement together, *"to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God"*. I think that it is striking that the Lord stopped in the middle of that verse when He stood up to preach. Why? We are in the day of grace. We are not yet in the day of vengeance of our God. That day will come!

One of the things we learn about prophecy from the Bible is that when God states that something will happen His word stands despite intervening events. God will be hindered in no thought of His (see Job 42:2).

It is interesting to view several prophecies that have been fulfilled. There are some Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the Old Testament period. For example, God tells Abraham that his descendants would be in Egypt and be enslaved for 400 years and afterwards they would come out with great possessions. (see Genesis 15) Years later His word was fulfilled when under the leadership of Moses God's people were delivered from slavery in Egypt.

Another prophecy was made after the destruction of Jericho. Joshua said that Jericho would be rebuilt. The work would be started in the death of a man's firstborn son and it would be completed in the death of his youngest son. (see Joshua 6:26). He prophesied under the direction of the Spirit of God. What happened? In the days of Ahab his prophecy came to pass (see 1

when God states that something will happen His word stands despite intervening events

Kings 16:34). These are two Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the Old Testament.

There are, of course, many Old Testament prophecies that have been already fulfilled in New Testament times. A believer who was converted in his mid-30s told me recently that when he was learning about the Bible it was a great help to him to realise how many Old Testament prophecies have already been fulfilled. In fact Matthew delights to tell us about so many things that were fulfilled when Jesus was here.

For example, at the beginning of Matthew's gospel it says, *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, 'God with us.'"* This prophecy was given about 700 years before the birth of Jesus and it came to pass at His birth. There are other prophecies that were fulfilled including Micah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. And it came to pass. Hosea announced, too, that, *"out of Egypt I called my son"* That also came to pass (*Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:15*).

When Jesus began His public ministry Matthew quotes the fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah, *"at the time he at first lightly, and afterwards heavily, visited the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, —the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations: the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them light hath shone"* (*Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:15*). As Jesus was undertaking His healing ministry Matthew again referred to what was fulfilled, *"he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were ill; so that that should be fulfilled which was spoken through Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases"* (*Matthew 8:16, 17*).

How wonderfully Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies in His birth and His life. In His death too many scriptures were fulfilled. Psalm 22 has several references to the sufferings of Jesus that actually took place when He was on the cross. Two of them are, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* and, *"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture"*. The gospel writer Matthew refers to them when he wrote his gospel.

Fulfilment continued after Jesus died and rose again. In the first preaching by the apostle Peter in Acts chapter 2, Peter quoted Old Testament scriptures, including Psalms 16 and 110, to emphasise that what God had said in the Old Testament had been brought to pass by the Lord Jesus in His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of God. How wonderful to know that so many prophecies have actually been fulfilled!

When the apostle Paul went into synagogue after synagogue throughout the Roman Empire, he delighted to *“show by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ”*. The Messiah had come that Jews had been awaiting for many centuries.

Many prophecies have been completely fulfilled, but this prophecy, mentioned in Isaiah 61 has been only partially fulfilled. When Jesus announced, *“To-day this scripture is fulfilled in your ears”* He did not include *“the day of vengeance of our God”*. We need to drink in the spirit of the quotation of Jesus to be able to understand the gospel. The gospel is to deliver people, to set persons free. Free from their sins. Free from being weighed down by burdens. Free to enjoy the liberty of the children of God.

We are still in the time of the acceptable year of the Lord. I think the disciples of Jesus were slow to understand this acceptable year. Do you know why I say that? Well, Jesus was going up to Jerusalem and people in Samaria did not want to receive Him. Two of his disciples remembered that in the time of Elijah fire had come down from heaven and destroyed his enemies. (2 Kings 1:9-12). They wanted Jesus to do the same to these Samaritans who did not receive Him. We are living in a world today when many people do not accept Christ. Do we want fire from heaven to come down and destroy them? Not a bit of it. We want persons to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

When Jesus was being betrayed by Judas and seized by a band of soldiers, Peter with his sword cut off the ear of the bondman of the high priest. Jesus told him to put his sword into his sheath. It is not the time for using the sword, not yet. The day of vengeance of our God will come, but not yet.

It is right to utter a word of warning in the gospel message, but it

is not now the day of wrath. The gospel continues: it is still the acceptable year of the Lord, the time when there is opportunity for anyone in the world to come to know the Saviour.

When Jesus died and rose again the disciples then understood the spirit of the gospel. It is lovely to read of these early preachings in the Acts of the Apostles. On that day of Pentecost to the Jews who were gathered in Jerusalem, Peter brought home their guilt and asserted that the One they had crucified had gone to the right hand of God. He then appealed to those responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus to repent of their sins and enjoy the full and free salvation that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. We too are in the day of God's salvation. We are in the acceptable year of the Lord. It is not the time for calling down judgment upon people.

You see the spirit of the acceptable year continuing at the stoning of Stephen. He accused his audience of murdering Jesus but there was no personal vindictiveness. So when people took up stones to kill him he said, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*" (Acts 7:60). He had drunk into the spirit of the gospel, the spirit of the dispensation of grace. It is not the day of vengeance of our God, not yet! It is still the day of God's grace. We need to keep drinking into the spirit of this dispensation.

Has this wonderful grace of God reached everyone here? It has reached me, thank God. Peter says after a vision, "*it came even to me*" (Acts 11:5). Thank God that the gospel of the grace of God has come "*even to me*" as it has to you. It is a wonderful thing to have a living relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ and know that Christ "*has set us free in freedom*" (Galatians 5:1).

Peter's advice to believers (Psalm 34:12-16)

I come to my second scripture in Psalm 34. It is a lovely Psalm. It exhorts us to praise God. It speaks about exalting His name. It speaks about seeking God, seeking the Lord, seeking Him in our fears as well as in our troubles and proving the blessing that comes from Him. But the writer raises a challenge in verse 12, "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth days, that he may see good?" As I mentioned before these verses in this Psalm are quoted by the apostle Peter when he writes to Christians who had been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. They were dispersed

throughout the Roman Empire and were enduring a fair degree of suffering, as many dear believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are enduring today in various parts of the world. Only this week I had an e-mail from a Christian who is in Egypt saying to me how much we need to pray for believers there, in view of the changing political situation. In different parts of the world, things are very difficult for real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a lot of concern in the society in which we live about Christians being belittled, Christians becoming sidelined in many aspects of life. However we should remember that in the early days of Christianity all believers had a difficult time. They did not find it easy to be believers. Those who believed in Jesus were regarded as a sect of the Jews and had little respect and often persecution from the world as well as being despised by non-Christian Jews. But the apostle Peter reminds them they were very precious, precious to God. It is a great thing to be under the shelter of the blood of Jesus and be of value to heaven.

The apostle Peter instructs these believers how to conduct themselves in an alien world, to pass through it as strangers and as sojourners, temporary residents. They had a home above, their hope centred in a risen Christ as our hope centres in Christ. And how were they to go through the world? They were to be respectful of authorities. Those who were servants had to take heed that they did a good job, an honest job. Those who were husbands and those who were wives had a practical word of counsel from the apostle Peter as well. He also gives this exhortation to help believers in their relationships with one another: *“sympathising, full of brotherly love, tender hearted, humble minded”*. These dear believers, like every believer including you and me, have purified our souls, *“by obedience to the truth to unfeigned brotherly love” (1 Peter 1:22)*. One of the effects of new birth is that not only have we a link with Christ but we have love for the people of God, for others who belong to Christ. Then he goes on to say, *“not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but on the contrary, blessing others, because ye have been called to this, that ye should inherit blessing”* and to quote this passage from Psalm 34.

It seems to me that we believers, in our conduct both towards other believers in the Lord Jesus and towards the world, should remember the quotation from this Psalm.

He says, *“What man is he that desireth life, and loveth days, that he may see good?”* Well, that is a good desire, to love life. Jesus came that people, *“might have life, and might have it abundantly”* (John 10:10). Sometimes I meet people in the street and they say to me, ‘Get a life’. They think Christianity is dead; there is no life in it, it is a kind of dead theory, a joyless existence. I do not believe that at all. There is life in Jesus, life for now and life for all eternity. It centres in the Man who is out of death.

There is nothing wrong with loving life. God wants us to *“love life and see good days”*. We can see good days even in times of trial. I had the joy this week of meeting a brother and a sister who are in real difficulty in their state of health. But it was a great treat to see them enjoying the day, as it were, and having joy in the Lord. God wants us to be kept bright in our spirits and kept fresh by our Lord, even in times of trial and difficulty

Peter gives a practical word, *“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile”*. I think that is very good instruction. How much damage we Christians can do with our tongues if we are not careful! As we read through the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testaments, we find many exhortations to guard our tongues.

One of the items of the fruit of the Spirit is self-control (Galatians 5:23). We all need self-control for our tongues in our relations with our fellow men and women lest we say things that are unwise or foolish and fail to commend the gospel. We also require self-control in our relations with our fellow believers on the Lord Jesus. Let us remember to be guarded in what we say and seek the help of the Spirit of God. How much damage has been done, even among the people of God, through careless and wrong talk.

In Matthew our Lord says, *“that every idle word which men shall say, they shall render an account of it in judgment-day”* (Matthew 12:36). How careful that should make us in what we say, what we say about others, what we say in relation to God, what we say in relation to the scriptures. Let us each practise the

exhortation, *"Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile"*.

Then the Scripture says, *"Depart from evil, and do good"*. Well, that is what a Christian should do. God is not evil. God is not the source of evil. God does not want us to be in communion with evil whether in ourselves or with others. So he says, *"Depart from evil"*. And then he adds, *"do good"*. I think that is an interesting couplet. Depart from evil, go away from it, keep clear of it. We are told in Timothy to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22), run away from them, get away from them. But then it says here, *"Do good"*. We are not to ignore other people but serve them (2 Timothy 2:24).

What a great model we have in Jesus. He never participated in evil of any kind. He never said evil things. He never thought evil thoughts. We, alas, do but we can keep them in check by the help of the Spirit of God. And He did not do evil; He left us a model that we should follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

And did He not do good? One of the things that the apostle Peter says about Him is, *"Jesus ... went through all quarters doing good"* (Acts 10:38). All quarters, not just the rich people's quarters but the poor people's quarters. He went into all quarters, all areas, doing good. What a wonderful Saviour He is. What a wonderful commendation of the love of God He showed in His life!

So it then says, *"seek peace, and pursue it"*. This is an exhortation taken up a number of times in the New Testament. Jesus said, *"Blessed the peace-makers"* (Matthew 5:9). It is a wonderful service to be a peace-maker, not only live in peace ourselves with God but to seek to be a peace-maker among His people.

And then he says, *"The eyes of Jehovah"* or, the Lord, *"are upon the righteous, and his ears are toward their cry"*. What an encouragement that is for everyone who loves the Lord and who seeks to do what pleases Him: His eyes are always upon the righteous. He always takes account of those who desire to go on rightly with God. And His ears are toward their cry. Think of what Malachi says about those who feared the Lord and spoke often one to another: *"Jehovah observed it, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared Jehovah,*

and that thought upon his name” (Malachi 3:16). God loves to take account of everything done and said for His pleasure in His people’s lives.

Then Psalm 34 says, *“The face of the LORD is against them that do evil”*. Peter then stopped and did not add *“to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”*. Even in the Old Testament God says in Jeremiah, *“whilst I have been speaking against him, I do constantly remember him still” (Jeremiah 31:20)*. God remembers His people, He never forgets them.

Sometimes we believers want to cut people’s names off from the earth. It is not the time for that. You might have to rebuke a brother or sister. There is nothing wrong with that if the rebuke is in the spirit of Christ. But it is not the time for cutting off their remembrance from the earth. This is the day of God’s grace.

Yet the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. I should never forget that and neither should you. That is true all the time. It is as true for the believer as for the unbeliever. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil. That is a sobering word for me: it pulls me up at times. I have to be careful. I have to guard myself. I have to watch myself with the help of the Spirit of God. That is all part of desiring to love life and see good days.

But the apostle Peter does not quote the last clause, *“to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”*. That time is going to come but not yet, not yet. We are in the day of grace. We are in the day when we believers have to watch our conduct, have to guard what we say, have to watch our associations of life. Remember that *“the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* and it continues to be (Psalm 110:10). The fear of God is an important basis in the lives of believers as we go through this world.

Israel and the World (Zechariah 9:9-10)

Finally I want to speak about the last scripture. The Book of Zechariah is a wonderful book with valuable teaching. In chapter 9, verse nine the prophet says, *“Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass”*. This remarkable scripture

was fulfilled, as stated by both Matthew and John when Jesus rode on a donkey into Jerusalem.

Zechariah tells us what marked Him: He is just, Zion's King is just. He was lowly: the service of Jesus was a lowly service, He was available to everyone. He did not come into Jerusalem on a horse. He did not ride on a war horse. He did not drive in a chariot into Jerusalem. He rode on a colt, even the foal of an ass.

It says about Him, too, *"having salvation"*. Well, the note to this says, 'bringing salvation by Himself'. And, of course, that is what He did. He came to Jerusalem and He worked out God's plan of salvation. There would be no salvation for you or me if Jesus had not died on the cross to open the way for us to have full and free salvation. So that the apostle Peter could announce in the Acts, *"salvation is in none other, for neither is there another name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). Thank God we have a full and free salvation based upon the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. The basis of our eternal blessing is His work on the cross, where He endured God's wrath against sin when He, the sinless one, was made sin for us.

When He came into Jerusalem Luke tells us that a multitude did rejoice, *"Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion"*. Zion's King was coming into Jerusalem and they did rejoice and they did shout His praises. Well might they rejoice as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Here was Zion's King coming in, the long promised Messiah! One of the proofs of His Messiahship in the New Testament was the way in which He rode on this donkey into Jerusalem. Zion's King was there and a good many rejoiced, at least for a short time as He fulfilled this scripture.

But He certainly did not fulfil the next sentence, *"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off"*. That did not happen, did it? The Roman Empire remained in control; the chariots of the Roman Empire were still there. The battle-bow, the spear and sword were still in evidence. And eventually, of course, Jerusalem was ransacked and destroyed. And the dominion of Jesus *"from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"* has not yet taken place.

The next important event will be what is going to happen from heaven when the Lord Jesus comes for His saints.

It is very interesting to see how prophecy is working towards its fulfilment. I do not want to go into too much detail but, as I stated earlier, a number of real believers around 1830 worked out from the

scriptures that there would be a return of Jews to the land of Israel and the rise of the revived Roman Empire. At that time the nations of Europe were still at one another's throats and they continued to be right into the 20th century. Also then the number of Jews in the land of Israel was very few. What has happened since then? As rightly foretold there are now many Jews back in Israel, many admittedly in unbelief. I recognise many aspects of prophecy have still to be worked out but a great number of Jews have come back into the land of Israel. And secondly, in Europe, as we all know, nations have come together to some extent yet marked by conditions of instability and weakness both in the economic and political spheres. It is not very hard for anyone to envisage how a strong person might arise like the beast out of the sea and take control of a revived Roman Empire and apparently be a saviour (Revelation 13).

Events are developing for prophecies to come to pass that are foretold in the Bible but not yet fulfilled. JN Darby says, when encouraging God's people to wait God's time and not to get caught up in the politics of this world, that 'God's ways are behind the scenes; but He moves all the scenes which He is behind'.² We do not always see how things are going to work out. In fact, some projections made in the 20th century about prophecy have not proved accurate. But God works out things in His own way and His own time and we need to be restful.

Our hope centres in Christ. The next important event will be what is going to happen from heaven when the Lord Jesus comes for His saints. The Scripture says, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come*" (Revelation 22:17). How we should long that Christ comes

² J. N. Darby 'Synopsis of the Books of the Bible' Vol. 5 Page 374

to take control of things, to put everything right, to put the world right, to put Israel in its sovereignly assigned place, for Jerusalem to be as God intended it to be. God will be hindered in no thought of His. Every Old Testament prophecy will come to pass. Certain events have partially come to pass but all will come to pass in the ordering of God in His own way and in His own time.

May we continue to trust in the Lord and God's word. Do not think that, *"his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"* is going to be achieved through the gospel. What happens through the gospel is that God takes out from the nations a people for His name. When Jesus comes to reign, He will reign fully over every person in every nation. At the Name of Jesus *"every knee should bow, ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to God the Father's glory"* (Philippians 2:11).

May we enter into the spirit of the gospel and may we be encouraged to reach out to others with the word of the grace of God and display the spirit of the gospel in our lives. May we heed the practical exhortations of Psalm 34 confirmed by the apostle Peter in his letter. And may we learn to wait God's time in relation to the passing and transient events of this world and look forward to that wonderful time when Zion's King will come again. He will reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

May we be encouraged to look into prophecy. May we be encouraged in our own personal links with Jesus. May we be encouraged to see what are the distinctive hopes of a heavenly people that centre in the Man at God's right hand. And may we be encouraged, too, to understand a little more about God's ways, as set out in the scriptures, in relation to this world and particularly in relation to His people Israel.

May the Lord help us for His name's sake.

Ken Hollands

An address at Woking, 8th December 2012