

Living Water

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(September – October 2016)

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Poetry Selection

In the 1740's the Church of Scotland invited the submission of metrical paraphrases of Scripture which could be used as hymns. The final selection was published in 1781. These four hymns were among the ones submitted:

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Recent Ministry

HE IS WORTHY

“And they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from its raging. And the men feared Jehovah exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto Jehovah, and made vows.

“And Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights

“And Jonah prayed unto Jehovah his God out of the fish’s belly; and he said:

I cried by reason of my distress unto Jehovah, and he answered me;

Out of the belly of Sheol cried I: thou heardest my voice. For thou didst cast me into the depth, into the heart of the seas,

And the flood was round about me:

All thy breakers and thy billows are gone over me.

And I said, I am cast out from before thine eyes,

Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple.

The waters encompassed me to the soul:

The deep was round about me,

The weeds were wrapped about my head.

I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;

The bars of the earth closed upon me for ever;

But thou hast brought up my life from the pit, O Jehovah my God.

When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah;

And my prayer came in unto thee,

Into thy holy temple...”

Jonah 1:15 – 2:10

“And very early on the first day of the week they [Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome] come to the sepulchre, the sun having risen... And entering in to the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed and alarmed; but he says

to them, Be not alarmed. Ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, the crucified one. He is risen, he is not here... But go tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goes before you into Galilee..."
Mark 16:2-6

I want to speak a little about what I think all here already know; but I trust that what I have to say will bring before our hearts more livingly the way that the Saviour has gone for us. We sang in our opening hymn of our Saviour's descent from glory and what we read in Jonah speaks prophetically of His descent into death and the grave. Think of the greatness and heavenly character of the One of whom we are speaking. He is the only beloved Son of God. Yet He went in a way of suffering for us.

When we take account what we are by nature we realise that without the intervention of Jesus, we could not escape condemnation. The simple truth is that we cannot answer to God. I know for myself that I have done things that are wrong, things that I am not proud of and which I cannot put right in God's sight. Were I to have to stand before God and justify myself, I could not do it. That is why God sent His Son to be our Saviour. The remarkable truth at the centre of the gospel is that God loves us and wants us to be in His presence. We could not be in His presence in our sin and wrong-doing, so God made a way that we can be made righteous.

What we read in the book of Jonah shows the cost involved in making that way. The judgment of God was borne by Jesus so that He might be our Saviour. He is my Saviour; do you know Him that way? This is a time of opportunity – if He is not your Saviour you can come to Him today. The scriptures we read show how

**God loves us and
wants us to be in
His presence**

far He went in suffering so that you and I might be saved.

We see in Matthew's gospel that some of the Pharisees asked the Lord for a sign and the Lord's reply was: *"A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and a sign shall not be given to it save the sign of Jonas the prophet. For even as Jonas was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, thus shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights"* (Matthew 12:39-40). Now it is a very remarkable thing that Jonah gives us one of the very few instances in the Old Testament where a prophet is sent by God to those outside of Israel. He is sent to the city of Nineveh, a gentile city. The grace of God stretches everywhere.

Now, Jonah was disobedient and where we commenced reading we see that he had to be thrown overboard so that God could direct him back to where He wanted him to go. But in doing so it gives us a picture of the way that the Lord Jesus went into death. Of course there was no disobedience with Him. We see throughout the gospel narratives that He was always going forward in complete obedience to His Father. The Lord knew the awfulness of what lay ahead. Yet He carried on, setting His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. He never turned aside. We read in the gospels how Jesus was brought before the authorities, how false witnesses were brought against Him, and how there was nothing that truly could be said against Him, and how He was rejected by the people, scourged, humiliated and crucified, but those were the least of His sufferings!

Jonah here is speaking for us of what the Lord entered into on the cross when He was made sin. In giving up His life He had to bear before God the whole question of sin itself and to bear my sin, and yours, if you have trusted in Him as

Saviour. He had to face the wrath of God, the wrath that would have fallen on you or me. Make no mistake; it is the wrath that will still fall on you if you have not trusted in Jesus. But for those who have trusted in Him there is the blessed assurance of knowing that Jesus has taken our place.

***"The deep was round about me,
The weeds were wrapped about my head.
I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;
The bars of the earth closed upon me for ever;"***

Just think what it was like for the Lord Jesus at that time, standing in our place. He was without sin. He had no sin to be judged but He was *"Made sin for us"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). He went down to the depths. Think of what Jonah must have felt like, going down, down, not knowing if he would ever come up, feeling enclosed, engulfed - engulfed by the wrath of God. It is to give us some apprehension of what the Lord went through as forsaken and enduring the judgement that is due to us.

Even in Jonah's experience we see his thoughts keep coming back to, *"thy holy temple"*. Jonah, of course, was learning through this something of what God is. But we also see what sustained the Lord Jesus. He always had the things of God before Him. He always had what was right for God, and He had God's love for us within Him all the way through.

At the end we see what Jonah came to, *"Salvation is of Jehovah"*. The work of the Lord Jesus had exhausted the judgment. Then it is possible to talk about salvation. That was when the door was opened for you and for me to come into blessing. Just think of it: the Lord Jesus went through so much but such a great result came out of it: the door opened for every one and any one who is willing to accept the Lord Jesus as Saviour, acknowledge their place as a sinner before God.

Well, I refer to the scripture in Mark because it has that beautiful message that was given to those faithful women. They did not understand at this point. They thought that Jesus had died but they still loved Him and they were still willing to come and care for Him. They got a beautiful message, *"He is risen, he is not here"*.

And so, the message of the gospel is about how we can have our sins forgiven, how the death of the Lord Jesus has made that way possible. But one of the beautiful things about the gospel is that it does not stop there - the Lord Jesus was raised! He so delighted His God and Father - His perfect submission, His complete bearing of the wrath of God, so delighted His God and Father that He raised Him from the dead. He is risen! He is glorified and He is available to each one of us. He would love to have each one of us ever closer with Him:

- If we are not saved, to come to Him, acknowledging Him as Lord and Saviour,
- If we know Him as Saviour, to come ever closer to Him.

The Lord Jesus is always available for any one who is willing.

The gospel message goes forth without limit. The Lord is risen, ascended, glorified and the message of salvation flows out world-wide; the Lord Jesus is available for every one who sees their need of a Saviour and receives Him into their heart.

Can we not appreciate such a great Saviour, One who has done so much for us, One who continues to do so much for us? May we continue to be encouraged in His Name. May we praise and appreciate Him, not just on Sundays but every day.

Tim Painter

A preaching of the gospel, Ambler, USA, 15th November 2015.

Poetry Selection

In the 1740's the Church of Scotland invited the submission of metrical paraphrases of Scripture which could be used as hymns. The final selection was published in 1781. These four hymns were among the ones selected for publication.

A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES

Paraphrase of Matthew 4:13-16

A people who in darkness walked
Have seen a glorious light;
The heavenly dawn broke forth on those
Who dwelt in death and night.
To us the promised Child is born,
To us a Son is given;
And on His shoulder ever rests
All power in earth and heaven.
His name shall be the Prince of Peace
For evermore adored;
The Wonderful, the Counsellor
For evermore adored.

John Morrison (1746 – 1798)

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO HIS OWN

Paraphrase of John 14:25-28

You soon will hear My voice no more;
My time has nearly come;
But soon from heaven the Holy Ghost
Your Comforter will come.
That heavenly Teacher, sent from God,
Shall your whole soul inspire,
Your minds be filled with sacred truth,
Your hearts with sacred fire.
Peace is the gift I leave with you,
My peace to you bequeath;

Peace that shall comfort you through life,
And cheer your souls in death.
I give not as the world bestows,
With promise false and vain;
Nor cares, nor fears shall wound the heart
In which My words remain.
William Robertson (? – 1745)

JESUS! HOW GLORIOUS IS THY GRACE

Paraphrase of Romans 3:19-22

Jesus! how glorious is Thy grace
When in Thy name we trust,
Our faith receives a righteousness
Which makes the sinner just.
Vain are the hopes the sons of men
Upon their works have built;
Their hearts by nature are unclean,
Their actions full of guilt.
Silent let Jew and Gentile stand
Without one vaunting word;
And humbled low, confess their guilt,
Before the righteous Lord.
No hope can on the law be built
Of justifying grace;
The law that shows the sinner's guilt
Condemns him to his face.
With Christ the Lord we died to sin;
With Him to life we rise –
To life which now begun on earth,
Is perfect in the skies.
Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748)

THE ASSEMBLING SHOUT

Paraphrase of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Take comfort, Christian, when your friends In Jesus fall asleep;
Their better being never ends;
Why then dejected weep?
As Jesus died and rose again
Victorious from the dead;
So His disciples rise, and reign
With their triumphant Head.
The time draws nigh, when from the clouds
Christ shall with shout descend,
And the last trumpet's awful voice
The heaven and earth shall rend.
Then they who live all changed shall be
And they who sleep shall wake;
The graves shall yield their ancient charge
For Christ His own shall take.
The saints of God, from death set free,
With joy shall mount on high;
And heavenly hosts with praises loud
Shall meet them in the sky.
John Logan (1747 - ?)

Testimony Section

HOW A WORLD WAR LED TO INWARD PEACE

The account of Pieter van den Berg's conversion

Pieter van den Berg (1922 – 2015) was the fourth child in a family of ten. He was brought up in a home where the Scriptures were valued and read but where Pieter never heard the gospel of God's love and grace. The reason for this was the fierce Calvinism of the Dutch Reformed Church. When Pieter returned home in 1945 and told one of his brothers that salvation was

available to him, his brother's reply was: 'No! You must be elect'.

Pieter left school at thirteen but he found it difficult to settle into a job and tried all sorts of things without success. The problem largely lay in the fact that he was a mischievous character. For instance once, bored at work, he advanced the workplace clock by one hour so that he could go home early. On another occasion he booby-trapped all the doors at a college where he was attending evening classes, so that when any of the doors were opened there was a loud bang as his gunpowder caps exploded. Eventually, in May 1939 he joined the Dutch Navy and after a period of training was posted to the *Sumatra*, a Dutch destroyer.

It was perhaps an unfortunate time to join the navy, since the German invasion of Holland took place in March 1940 and within five days Holland had surrendered. Fortunately the *Sumatra* and her crew, along with other Dutch vessels, escaped to the UK and London became the Headquarters of the Dutch Navy for the rest of the war.

After various naval postings that took him across much of the globe, Pieter joined the *Van Ghent* and had a narrow escape when during operations in the Java Sea the ship ran aground and broke up. Pieter was next posted to the *Witte de With*, a destroyer forming part of an allied fleet of ships created to intercept the Japanese invasion of Java which was then part of the Dutch East Indies. It was at this point, facing the daily intensity of the conflict, that the full force of the war struck Pieter.

On the *Witte de With* Pieter took part in the Battle of the Java Sea, a fierce naval action which resulted in heavy allied losses and was a decisive victory for the Japanese. One of Pieter's sons wrote later: 'Can you imagine what it was like? When the ship rocks with torpedoes exploding next to you, shells are

hitting your vessel and you are running busily around on deck, thousands of miles away from home? Nobody you care about has any idea of whether you are dead or alive, and you know God is going to meet you in judgment, yet you feel you cannot communicate with Him even though you desperately would like to?' The *Witte de With* escaped from the battle and returned to Java, one of the few ships to do so. During the night it was bombed in the harbour and sank, though through the mercy of God Pieter was not on board at the time.

These experiences made Pieter begin to think seriously about God but he was still not convinced that he was among those chosen for heaven. On 2nd March 1942 Pieter escaped from Java aboard a merchant vessel and got to Australia. Twenty-four ships left Java together that night but only eleven reached Australia safely.

During his time in the East Indies, Pieter had received training in the use of ASDIC. This was a sonar device which was being fitted to ships to help detection of submarines. On 23rd March 1942, Pieter joined the *Tromp* as an ASDIC operator. Later the *Tromp* formed part of the naval escort for 5,000 troops on their way to New Guinea to defend it from the Japanese. With so much at stake the responsibility of the ASDIC operator was considerable. In the early hours of 24th December 1942 Pieter was found in 'a state of drowsiness' and he was duly disciplined for endangering the fleet. When between the hours of 4.00 and 5.00 am on 3rd February 1943 he was found asleep again at the ASDIC he was removed from duty and told that he would have to face a Court Martial.

The Court was to be held in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). All seemed bleak but God was preparing the way for Pieter to be brought out of darkness into the light of the children of God. While he was in Colombo awaiting his Court Martial, he met Theunis Mulder who had recently come to Christ at the Keswick

Missionary Home in Colombo. Theunis persuaded Pieter to go to the mission with him so on 6th June 1943 (just days before his 21st birthday) they both went.

At the Mission a man called Mr. Baird started talking about the gospel, and he presented it to Pieter in a way that he had never heard before. He told Pieter that Jesus Christ was the Saviour and that salvation was for everyone who believes. Pieter was not to consider whether he was elect or not; the question was his responsibility for his sins, sins that he knew he had committed and that weighed upon him.

So powerful and fresh was this presentation of Jesus that it came to the point that, right there, in the Keswick Missionary Home on 6th June 1943 both men knelt down and Pieter accepted the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour.

Pieter wrote later, 'The light of what was presented to me, that for me the Lord Jesus had come into the world – from the darkness I had been in – it became the brightest light in my soul. Upstairs in that house, Colpetty Road, Colombo, there it was that I accepted the Lord Jesus, and I knew that my sins had been forgiven, that it had all been borne by the Lord Jesus on the cross, the whole thing. The simplicity of the gospel!'

Pieter's Court Martial was pending and Mr Baird approached the navy, telling them that Pieter was a changed man. This seemed to weigh considerably in his favour and although a 'Guilty' verdict was given the punishment was left to his Commanding Officer. The outcome was that Pieter was sentenced to 21 days light arrest and demotion to Sailor 3rd Class.

Early in October 1943 Pieter wrote, using the 'Red Cross Letter System', to his family to tell them that he had come to Christ. This system was a way in which prisoners of war and those in German-occupied territories, such as Holland, could have limited contact with their families. Letters were limited to twenty-five words and must relate only to family matters. Pieter's 24 word

letter ran:

“Dear Father, Mother,
Brothers, received news, thank
God received Jesus in my heart
as my Saviour praise Him hope
and trust. God reigns!

Piet.”

I now have
peace with the
Father, through
His beloved Son

Often replies from occupied territories were much delayed and it was not until November 1944 that Pieter had the welcome reply:

“Dear Piet,

Received the good report with joy, hope you may be spared
so we can hear more from your own mouth soon.

Parents, brothers, sisters.”

In September 1944, anticipating the liberation of Holland, Pieter wrote a long letter home, telling his family in greater detail about his experience. Three short extracts convey something of the change that had been brought about:

Dear family, you have not known me other than having a rebellious nature, but through a deep way I have had to experience what made the gentile soldier cry out: ‘Truly, this was the Son of God’.

How all this came to be, I cannot tell you in an extensive way, but it is enough to know that I now have peace with the Father, through His beloved Son, through whom I have found that peace, that surpasses all knowledge.

And also beloved, I now know that also for me on that cross my sins were borne by Him, who delighted to do His Father’s will. Is He not worthy to be loved? And so I am no longer the same Piet that you have known.

During his time in Colombo in 1943 Pieter met up with a

number of Christian believers but it was a fellow Dutchman, Jan Nijkerk, who helped him most in his spiritual growth and who introduced him to Christian believers in Portsmouth (UK) when he arrived there on board the destroyer *Tjerk Hiddes* in October 1944. After various other naval assignments he was finally able to return to Holland in July 1945. He still had time to serve in the navy and he was posted to a signal station at the Hook of Holland where he remained until his discharge in September 1946.

This article is based on information given in “Beside Still Waters – the account of Pieter van den Berg’s journey and conversion through World War II” by Jason Wain (2015). I would like to record my thanks to Jason for permission to use this story about his grandfather in Living Water. Ed.

Further information about “Beside Still Waters” is available from Jason Wain: e-mail:jasonwain@live.co.uk



Tjerk Hiddes

Photograph by courtesy of www.netherlandsnavy.nl

THE DAY OF MY BAPTISM

There were 47 of us in the prison who wished to be baptised. We came together with expectancy and a spirit of reconciliation and obedience and with a sense that we were coming before God. We knew that we had been cleansed by the blood of Jesus and that even our most secret sins were covered and cleansed for He carried all our sins. Oh the joy of believing! I lost the best of my years but Jesus has found me. By grace I have been saved. I have been won by His love!

In my baptism today I wanted to publicly extinguish the smoke of drugs, alcohol and all my mistakes and show that I now had a new life in Christ. I wanted to cease from evil and, through Christ, to learn to do what is good (see Isaiah 1:17). I prayed, "Make me Lord Jesus to learn from Thee so as to be renewed day by day in this place".

They brought us to a pool where the baptisms were to take place. As I waited for my turn I thought of the cross, of how the life of Jesus was taken from the earth (Acts 8:33). Previously I had lived for the world and all it had to offer but now I was on the side of Jesus. The revelation of His name enraptured me.

They plunged me in the water then lifted me up; it was as though a new being filled me. I did not want to dry myself! I began to cry for joy. One brother embraced me and made me feel as if the Lord Himself was embracing me. I was not any more of the world; I belong to Him. He gave me back my body but now every one of my members was to be sanctified to Him. All was to be new. I prayed, "Guide me, Lord, into Thy world; I need to learn so much". I wondered if I would be able to function in the one body of the Lord, in the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth (see 1 Timothy 3:15).

Lord, I am so weak and frail, please be my strength.

We learn that some said of the Christian martyrs in Rome, "These persons are persecuted and despised, they do not seek any place down here but care for a place up there. They control their spirit and are masters of their own souls,

Nothing, nor anybody can take their joy away because it is centred in the Lord". Will others say something like it when they see my movements here? Lord, I am so weak and frail, please be my strength.

Will I be able to listen to His voice, to follow Him? Well, I must yield my ears to Him in the same way as I must yield all the other members of my body to Him and not listen to the voice of strangers – though there are so many around.

This was my baptism. I have so much to learn and to unlearn. If you read this please may I count on your prayers, also for everyone here so that we may accept the word of God as the only true authority?

Ramon Souza

3rd May 2016

Melchoir Romero, Buenos Aires

Translated from the Spanish by Robin Garvie.

A voice from the past

HOW GOOD IS YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE?

Background Note

*Some years ago an aged sister in the Lord passed on some bound copies of a Christian magazine called **Sunbeams for the Home** (Editor: J Vinall) which she had kept from her own childhood. They are now just over 100 years old. **Sunbeams** had pages devoted to Scripture questions and puzzles but the level of Bible*

knowledge required to answer them and the way that the questions opened up some important truths of the Bible were very striking; some sample questions are given here together with the answers. Ed.

From “Sunbeams for the Home” – June 1912

A mighty warrior, attended by his bodyguards and others, visits the palace of a neighbouring monarch, causing him much anxiety. The king’s mind is much relieved by receiving a message from one of his subjects and the visitor drives off to the humble home of this man. Though at first disgusted he ultimately obtains the fulfilment of all his wishes.

Questions:

1. Give the names of the persons and places involved in this occurrence.
2. Show in three ways how we have in this incident a beautiful illustration of God’s sovereign grace.

Answers:

1. The name of the warrior was Naaman, captain of the host of Syria. He came to Jehoram, king of Israel, to be healed of his leprosy; on account of this the king was distressed, fearing that the king of Syria was by this means seeking a quarrel. Hearing about this Elisha sent to the king asking for Naaman to be sent to him. Elisha told Naaman to dip in the Jordan seven times and he would be healed. (See 2 Kings 5:6-14).
2. The three illustrations of God’s sovereign grace are:
 - Jesus said: “...there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27). This shows God’s sovereign grace, calling a gentile.
 - Naaman wished to make the prophet a present but Elisha

refused to receive payment. So, the gift of God is not to be purchased with money. Salvation is God's free gift in sovereign grace, without money and without price (See Isaiah 55:1)

- When Naaman was told to go and wash in the Jordan he was offended and turned away in a rage and would never have accepted the blessing. So with us, we should never have become partakers of God's gracious provision for us unless His sovereign grace compelled us. (See Luke 14:23).

From "Sunbeams for the Home" – April 1913

A large army of warriors is encamped in a wide valley believing themselves to be very secure. A much smaller force, led by its king, is stealthily approaching. It draws near, concealed by a grove of trees, where it lies in ambush for some time. Presently a slight breeze springs up which moves the upper branches of the trees. At a word from the king the small force leaves its cover, bursts upon its foes, and gains a complete victory.

Questions:

1. Give the name of the valley and the Scripture reference
2. Why was this plan of attack adopted?
3. What may we learn from this incident?

Answers:

1. The valley is the "Valley of Rephaim" (1 Chronicles 14:9).
2. The battle plan was by express command of God Himself. When David and his men heard "*the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees*" then they would know that God had gone before them to smite the army of the Philistines. (See 1 Chronicles 14:14-15)

3. There are two great lessons for us:

- The first is complete dependence on God. David had already, by enquiring of God, gained a great victory over the Philistines at this very place. So he might have set out eagerly the second time. But no! He waits and enquires again, and God says: *"Go not up after them; turn round them and come upon them opposite the mulberry-trees"* At God's time and in God's appointed place he may act and win a great victory.
- The second lesson is the necessity of being quiet, yet alert. No great hurricane was to shake the trees – the sign was to be just a *"sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry-trees"*. David and his men were on the watch. They were ready when God spoke and did as God commanded. If we who love the Lord were more constantly enquiring of God and listening for the answer there would be greater glory to His name and an increase of the knowledge of God in our hearts.

From "Sunbeams for the Home" – July 1913

An impoverished man who has left a young ass outside, stands in the court of the tabernacle. A priest speaks to the man very firmly and the poor man is in great distress. The ass seems in some way to be the subject of their conversation. A passer-by notices what is going on and enquires about the cause. He says something to the priest and walks away. Shortly he returns bringing with him a lamb. The lamb is sacrificed on the altar in the court, and the poor man, after thanking his new friend warmly, leads his ass away rejoicing.

Questions:

1. The above is in the form of a story but it is fully substantiated by a verse in the early part of Exodus: quote the verse.

2. Explain as briefly as you can what we learn from this scene
3. Quote five New Testament scriptures in proof of the answer to "2" above

Answers:

1. The verse is Exodus 13:13: *"And every firstling of an ass shalt thou ransom with a lamb: and if thou do not ransom it, thou shalt break its neck; and every firstborn of a man among thy sons shalt thou ransom"*
2. We learn from this incident that a man is put on the level with an unclean animal. Redemption must take place and that at the cost of the life of another. The ass is redeemed with a lamb and we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God. He took our place that we might be made clean. What wondrous grace!
3. Five New Testament Scriptures in support of this are:
 - "...Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).
 - "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).
 - "In whom (Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offences according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).
 - "...ye have been redeemed... by precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ..." (1 Peter 1:18-19).
 - "...having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12).

Lena Hayne

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

At the conclusion of the apostle Paul's preaching on Mars Hill at Athens some people believed, some mocked and some said "We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32) but there is no record that they had another opportunity for it says. "Paul departed from among them" (v. 33).

Let me tell you of something that happened in my own life. I have never forgiven myself in regard of it. Over thirty years ago, when I was a young Christian, I was lodged with several other young men in a big house and in that house was a man named Trevor, to whom I had often spoken about the Lord. One Saturday night a gospel meeting was being held and I said to him, 'I wish you would come and hear the gospel tonight'.

'No', he said, 'I will come next week'. I told him that next week he might not have the opportunity but he insisted that he could not come that night but would do so the following week.

On the following Tuesday I was sitting in my room and it was past midnight. I had been reading in the Bible about the coming of the Lord and I thought to myself, supposing the Lord were to come tonight, are all in this house prepared to meet Him? I at once thought of Trevor and had a profound sense that the Spirit of God would have me go and speak with him. I was deeply impressed with the prospect of the Lord coming that night and that man not being ready. I thought that I could not go and hammer in his door at that time of night for I would disturb others in the house; so after a long argument with myself, but utterly unhappy in my spirit, I decided to leave it. The next morning we all went to business as usual but on my way home in the evening I met one of my fellow lodgers who told me that Trevor had been killed in an accident that morning. I never forgave

myself. Oh, for one more opportunity to speak to that man about Christ, but I had missed it forever.

I trust that you will not delay. *“Others said, we will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain clave unto him and believed”*. The names of some of them are written down for us here in the scripture. *“Among which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them”*. But the writing is still going on, for the Spirit of God is writing yet. Is He going to write your name down in this, it may be the last hours of the day of His grace? Are you going to decide for Christ today and have your name inscribed amongst those who believe?

Herbert Gill

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A word for today

THE COMING OF THE LORD – PART 2

Luke 12:1-35

The previous article showed that deliverance from the fear of man and the absolute certainty of God’s care were essential if we are truly to be waiting for the coming of the Lord. In this second article Edward Dennett carries matters a stage further. Ed.

There is another thing. I will suppose for a moment that all fear of man is gone, and that you can rest upon the heart of God and say, ‘Yes, I don’t know what is going to happen to-morrow, or where to-morrow’s food is to come from, yet I know that God cares for me.’ Now the other thing is that the Lord seeks to establish us in grace now, and we must be, if we are to wait for the Lord's return; and so you get, *“Fear*

not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (v. 32). There is an exhortation to seek in the previous verse, now it is all grace. He wants to establish the hearts of His people in the grace of the Father.

I want to point out two things. It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; that brings in relationship. It is His delight as the Father to do it. It connects itself with the passage in Matthew 13: *"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"* (v. 43). It goes on to the display of the kingdom by and by, when all God's people will be seen in the same glory as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It is then that He will come forth as the Sun of Righteousness, and it is then that, in connection with His people, He will take the kingdom and reign from the river to the ends of the earth, and all His people of this present period, and past periods too, will be displayed in the same glory with Him. I have alluded to the passage more than once; *"When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"* (1 John 3:3). Then just see the contrast! Look at the conditions now; most of us know what bad health is, and to be weak in body in passing through this world. Now just raise your thoughts to that day when all the saints will come out with Christ and be displayed in the same glory as Himself. *"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* The whole force of the scripture lies in that word *"give"*; it is the grace of the Father, and what the Lord wants to do is to establish us in the sense of this grace of which He is speaking.

Then there are two other things. The first is this, until I am established in grace I will never grow. A legal soul may be very pious, but it won't grow, and hence Peter says at the end of his second epistle, *"Grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18). If you

Why were you born into this world?

want to grow you must be established in grace. When a saint falls into temptation we sometimes have an idea that

we shall help him best if we go and bring a little bit of law to bear upon him. We feel we ought to be hard and find fault. No, you will never restore a soul in that way; you must go in the truth of grace if you would touch his heart. We will never grow unless we are established in the grace of God. You get illustrations of it in Scripture. In 2 Timothy 2:1, where everything has gone to the bad, the apostle writes to Timothy, *"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."* It is that only which will give us power to deal with souls in days of difficulty, and so here I need to be established in grace, and when I am so established, then it is I shall grow, because then I shall be in the holy atmosphere in which God would have me be, and my heart is melted by the revelation of His grace to me in His beloved Son.

May I add one thing to that, and say, we never get established in grace until we get to God's side of things, and view ourselves from God's side. Why were you born into this world? Only for one reason if you are Christians, namely, to be connected with the purpose of God. It is all of grace. It was God who brought me into the world, who revealed Christ to me, who sustains me every day, and will take me all through the wilderness, and preserve me unto that moment when I shall see the blessed Lord face to face. It is all grace, and I need to be established in grace to understand the heart of God, and to be able to wait for the Lord's return.

Now I pass to another thing, and it is this. If I am established in grace, then I have to become a representative of grace to those about me, and thus the Lord says—for it is the connection in the thought of the scripture—*"Sell that ye have,*

and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (vv. 33, 34). I think you will see plainly that unless I am in the truth of grace I cannot express grace. Now it is a principle in Scripture that the believer in any dispensation is to reveal God as He is known in that dispensation; that is, the Jew was to express a righteous Jehovah, but now He is revealed as the God of all grace, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the God of our salvation. He is a giving God; "giving" characterises the day of grace, and we are to be givers too, and so express the heart of God in our contact with men as we pass through this world.

The Lord now goes back to the principle He laid down at the end of the parable. *"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God."* Now, consequently, you get treasure in heaven—*"a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."* I was exceedingly struck in meditating upon this to-day with a scripture that came across my mind in connection with it: *"Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."* How marvellous! You meet a child of God, who is weary and thirsty; you give him simply a cup of cold water in Christ's name. This act becomes a treasure in heaven, and by and by it will be acknowledged, for *"he shall in no wise lose his reward."* The Lord points out the same truth here, and there will be a treasure laid up for you in heaven. That is the principle which the Lord teaches us here, and then He adds, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* If somebody is very dear to you, you are always thinking about that person, your thoughts follow your treasure;

and so the only way to have your minds set upon things above is simply to have your treasure in heaven. We may consent to that, and say Christ is our treasure. If Christ is my treasure my thoughts will be with Him. That is the last point in the condition of soul needful for waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever I read, *"Let your loins be girded about,"* I have always said to myself, 'How?' My loins never will be girded about unless Christ is my treasure; if not, I have not the motive or the power for it. Every one will admit that where your treasure is there will your heart be, but that shows the importance of having Christ as our treasure in the heavens.

I am conscious of it myself, and I am sure many of us are while I am speaking, how our thoughts are so often upon things of earth, and yet God is beckoning us on to be occupied with things which are where Christ is at the right hand of God. If you want to be heavenly minded, the only way is to have your mind upon the things of heaven.

I have given you to-night a kind of preliminary address to show the necessity of a right state of soul to wait for the Lord's return.

I trust the Lord will lay it upon our hearts to consider what has been advanced this evening, that we may all seek to be in this condition, so that day by day it may be a constant thing for us to be waiting for the Lord's return — a real expectation. Where there is a real expectation there will be power in the soul, because the Spirit of God will lead to it, and there will be a holy walk and conversation, for *"every man that hath this hope in Him"* (that is, Christ) *"purifieth himself, even as He is pure."*

Edward Dennett (1831 – 1914)

To be continued