

Living Water

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

Stone Publishing Trust
33 The Floats,
Riverhead
SEVENOAKS
TN13 2QT

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.

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.

Cover Picture: Two streams meet, Val d'Ultimo, Italy - J.E.Casavecchia

Editor: Mark Lemon

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

Living Water 140

(March – April 2017)

Recent Ministry

CHRIST IN HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE	David Greeves	1
THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	Tim Pons	7
<i>Words given at the marriage of Sehyeon Kim and Rhoda Greeves, Belfast, 2 September, 2016.</i>		

Poetry Selection

A MARRIAGE HYMN	John Berridge	11
------------------------	---------------	-----------

Testimony Section

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BETHEL FLAG	12
<i>March 24th 2017 marks the 200th anniversary of the first use of the “Bethel” flag</i>	
AN ACT OF FAITH	15
<i>A story where the key event happened nearly 180 years ago but has timeless relevance since the story is about faith and the influence of that faith on the life of a believer.</i>	

A voice from the past

“HE BRINGETH THEM TO THEIR DESIRED HAVEN”	J. B. Stoney	17
<i>A word given at the marriage of Mr & Mrs Roland Edwards, Hazelville, 29th January 1895,</i>		

A word for today

THE COMING OF THE LORD – Part 4	Edward Dennett	18
<i>Concluding this series.</i>		

Recent Ministry

CHRIST IN HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE.

I want to speak about the Lord Jesus having His rightful place.

Sehyeon and Rhoda, it is wonderful to see you now that you are married. What we have witnessed today is not just any marriage but a marriage in the Lord. Marriage in the Lord is not something only for the beginning of your lives together but it is something that needs to be maintained and experienced on a day to day basis. So I looked at the Bible to see what marriage according to God is like. If we find what marriage is to be we will know something of what it will be like when we see the Lord and the great end of the ways of God seen in the marriage of the Lamb – Christ and the church. There are three things spoken of in the Bible that mark marriage according to God:

- Love
- Joy
- Unity

You might say these can be found in any marriage but they can only be fully enjoyed when the Lord has His rightful place in our lives and our marriages enabling us to experience and exhibit these three things.

Love

My first Scripture is in Ephesians:

“Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord, for a husband is head of the wife, as also the Christ is head of the assembly. He is Saviour of the body. But even as the assembly is subjected to the Christ, so also wives to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives, even as the Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered himself up for it, in order that he might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:22-26)

At home we have a small picture frame and there is in it a verse

from the Song of Songs: *"Many waters cannot quench love, Neither do the floods drown it" (Song of Songs 8:7)*. I often think about that because the love of God has never been quenched. God made this world and it was perfect in every aspect. He could say it was *"very good" (Genesis 1:31)*. Man was placed in the very best conditions in that wonderful garden. He was told that he could eat the fruit of all the trees he desired except for that one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man, as we know, took of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil and disobeyed God and sin came into the world.

I cannot say what God must have felt at that time. But the love of God for man had, you might say, its first crash of the breakers of water against it. Was that love quenched? No! What did God say? He spoke of the woman's seed crushing the serpent's head. The serpent typified Satan, and the crushing spoke of what the Lord Jesus was going to accomplish at Calvary in taking the burden of sin upon Himself and finally when He comes in power. God looked down all the aeons of time and He saw again and again the people that He had made falling into sin. Did God give up? No! He sent His prophets again and again to appeal to man. That love could never be quenched.

"God having spoken in many parts and in many ways formerly to the fathers in the prophets, at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Where man has disregarded God at every opportunity, God sent His Son, *"to them the last, saying, They will have respect for my son" (Mark 12:6)*.

Think of the life of the Lord Jesus on earth; He was attacked for His words, there were men ready to set Him up and catch Him, there were those who wanted rid of Him and several times tried to kill Him. And yet, what did He say? *"No one has greater love than this, that one should lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13)*. We find at the end of the gospels the Lord Jesus doing just that.

I can think of *"No greater love"*, than as the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross for men and women, where they had put Him; He says, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:24). Out of that darkness when the Lord Jesus was bearing the sins of every person who has ever trusted in Him, He cries, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Mark 15:34). He was forsaken because He loved us and He made Himself an offering for sin. And finally at the end He says, *"It is finished"*, *"Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit"* (John 19:30, Luke 23:46).

Greater love has no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends. Think of that love; it is selfless, never seeking what is its own (see 1 Corinthians 13:5), always giving, always there. The centuries of scorn and mockery, disinterest and indifference that have come against the love of God have never been able to quench it.

Now, in each one of our lives, those of us that trust in Him, we know that love of God. Many times we heard the gospel preaching and heard that Jesus was the Saviour of sinners. Many times, perhaps, we were given tracts and leaflets – God was appealing and appealing and we were indifferent to it until the day that finally He touched our hearts. I say all this for two reasons: one because I know that there are some here who have not yet asked the Lord Jesus to save them. In His love He is appealing to you again that you might be saved.

But I say it also for another reason because this is the love that husbands are to show to their wives. Regardless of what it might take, it is to be constant, never changing, through and through, *"Husbands, love your own wives, even as the Christ also loved the assembly"*.

There is a tremendous love that has been shown in Christ and this is to characterise the love in a Christian marriage. The background to a Christian marriage is the mutual understanding by the husband and the wife of the love that the Lord Jesus has

shown them. So, as we grow in our knowledge of the Lord's love, so also should our love in our marriages grow because we realise how far that love extends.

There is also the side of testimony to it as well, because people are to see in a marriage in the Lord something of the love of God. We are not perfect and our marriages, as is often said, are not unions between angels but between two sinners, albeit saved by grace. We get instruction here, *"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands"*. I think that will make it easier for the husband to love his wife, enabling others to see something of the love of the Lord Jesus in our marriages.

Joy

I am going to read in John's gospel: *"And on the third day a marriage took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also, and his disciples, were invited to the marriage. And wine being deficient, the mother of Jesus says to him, They have no wine. Jesus says to her, What have I to do with thee, woman? mine hour has not yet come. His mother says to the servants, Whatever he may say to you, do. Now there were standing there six stone water-vessels, according to the purification of the Jews, holding two or three measures each. Jesus says to them, Fill the water-vessels with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he says to them, Draw out now, and carry it to the feast-master. And they carried it. But when the feast-master had tasted the water which had been made wine (and knew not whence it was, but the servants knew who drew the water), the feast-master calls the bridegroom, and says to him, Every man sets on first the good wine, and when men have well drunk, then the inferior; thou hast kept the good wine till now"* (John 2:1-10).

This is the second feature. You might think it is a bit strange but if you look at Psalm 104 you find a verse which says, *"wine which gladdeneth the heart of man"* (v. 15). So wine here is really a picture of joy. The Lord Jesus was invited to the

wedding. We love to think of the Lord Jesus being here with us today and in the marriage at Cana recorded in John's gospel He was present but not in His rightful place. The Lord Jesus is not just to be a guest at the wedding. He is to be the host. It is He who has drawn you together, it is He who has placed you together and He is to be given the central place in your marriage. In this marriage at Cana the Lord Jesus was just a guest. You might say it was a Christian marriage but He was not in the centre.

You notice what happens: the wine begins to run out. The joy begins to grow dim. We have all had that experience when we have lost our sight of the Lord; the joy begins to grow dim. What do they do? They come to the Lord Jesus; they begin to give Him His proper place: *"Whatever he may say to you, do"*. If the Lord is at the centre of your marriage what is the result? Well, the feast master says the wine is better than anything that went before. The joy is more than anything that went before! There is no record of that wine ending. The joy that comes with Christ is never-ending. It is better than any joy this world can offer.

So I just commend to you the importance of having the Lord in His rightful place. It will keep the joy in your marriage.

Unity

"Salute Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workmen in Christ Jesus, (who for my life staked their own neck; to whom not I only am thankful, but also all the assemblies of the nations,) and the assembly at their house" (Romans 16:3).

The last thought I have is unity. The beginning of Genesis says, *"a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh"*. There is no disunity there. There is nothing quite like the marriage relationship. Birthdays and big events come and go. Even the wedding day comes and goes. But tomorrow, when you wake up, you will still be married; and the day after that and the day after that,

as long as the Lord leaves us here. There is the permanence about it. And God has given us that permanent relationship to indicate to us as far as possible what it will be like in eternity to be united with Christ. The only thing that can separate us in marriage is death or the Lord’s coming when we shall be with Him for ever.

A short time ago you both signed the register. With that signature Rhoda signed away her surname. So from now on she will be known as Mrs Sehyeon Kim. I think that is remarkable because when a couple get married here we stop seeing them as two different names; we see them as one. As far as possible there is unity. That time is coming when we shall be with the Lord and we shall be one with Him: real unity.

This couple that I read of, Priscilla and Aquila, are mentioned six times in the Bible: three times he comes first, three times she comes first. They are united in everything they did. When the Lord is the centre of marriage, He has a wonderful effect on that unity because He enables us in that unity to be serviceable to Him. Priscilla and Aquila staked their own lives. They were together in that. It was not just Aquila, but both of them.

They opened their house for that assembly to meet in. It was not just Aquila saying I will open up my house; they were in it together. Elsewhere you have Apollos. He was teaching and he did not quite know the truth and so they took him to their house and they, *“unfolded to him the way of God more exactly”*(Acts 18:26). They were in it together and they were serviceable to Christ.

Having the Lord in His rightful place does not just mean that you are united: it means that unity springs up into service for Him and the glory of His name while we are here.

~~~~~  
Well, I leave these three things — love, joy and unity. When the Lord is the centre it has a wonderful effect upon them all. It

says at the end of Ephesians chapter 5, *“This mystery is great, but I speak as to Christ, and as to the assembly”*. It is good to remember that we are married until the Lord comes. While we are here we have a wonderful opportunity, as it were, to experience what it will be like when we meet Christ. You have been waiting, you have been preparing for this wedding and now finally it is here. Just think of that day when the heavens will open and we shall go to be with Christ. Finally, after all this time of waiting we shall be with Him and we shall see Him and we shall be like Him.

That is what, I think, the Lord would have us to think of in a marriage. It is to put before us a vision of what is coming in eternity that it might characterise everything that you do as married in the Lord.

David Greeves

## THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Sehyeon and Rhoda, I would like to look at a Scripture in Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law”* (Galatians 5:22-23)

We came here today to witness your wedding but to do more than that; we came to celebrate and to share in the joy of your wedding day. Most of us, if we were to think of an ideal wedding, would say that it would be between a young man and a young woman who love each other so much that they want to spend the rest of their lives together and are prepared to make that commitment before God and before witnesses. You have made that commitment this morning.

Somebody asked me recently – I am not sure why they asked me – they asked me what the secret of a successful marriage was. I just smiled and said that I thought the secret of a successful marriage was to be tolerant – it really helps to have

a tolerant .... husband! I could find you a scripture for that.

But the Bible says far more than that about marriage: David has just spoken to you about some of the things that the Bible says, that God says, about marriages. There is something that I want to say to you about what makes a successful marriage from this scripture that I have read. But first, if that ideal wedding is between a young man and a young woman who love each other so much that they want to spend the rest of their lives together, then you can't help thinking that there is a greater love still that has been told ... the greatest love story that man knows.

We heard of it from the Bible. The greatest love story of all is not about love between a man and a woman. It is the love between God and the people that He has made, people that had turned away from Him and did not want to know Him, people like you and like me. It is the story of the God who loved so much that He would not let His people go. It is the story of the God who was prepared to pay any price to bring His people back.

It is the story of the God who loved so much, whose love was so deep and so true that He was prepared to give the thing that was most precious to Him. It is the story of the God who sent His own Son to save the people that He loved.

It is the story of the Son who loved so much that He came, came into this world 2000 years ago. Jesus was here; God sent His Son to teach and to preach and to heal and to be crucified, to offer Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. It is the greatest story of love that we have known. God sent His Son to be crucified. It is the story of the Son who came, and in that crucifixion, because He loved, took the place of every person who would trust Him, and bore their sins and took away the stain that stood between them and their God, took it upon Himself and took it away. It is the story of a love that stayed there on the cross until the end, until He said, *"It is finished"*.

It is also the story of the love of a people who did not know God and learned to love Him, a people who learned to understand who Jesus was. It is the story of joy. It says on that first resurrection day when His disciples saw Jesus again alive in that upper room, the Scripture says, *"they did not believe for joy"* (Luke 23:41). I am not sure that there is a greater description of joy in the Bible than that. The disciples had seen Him die. They had seen Him crucified, they had seen Him buried and now He was standing in front of them, talking, eating, speaking. He was there and they could not believe for joy.

It is the story of a God who loved so much that when His Son went back to heaven promising that He would come back again, He would not leave His people on their own. He sent His Spirit, God's own Spirit, to live in the hearts of everyone that trusts Christ. And what does His Spirit do? What does God's Spirit do as He works in your heart and mine? He makes you more like Christ if you let Him. Day by day, little by little, the Spirit works in your heart and in mine, if we let Him, and He makes us a little bit more like Jesus.

And so I read you these verses; they are not about marriage; they are something that the apostle Paul wrote nearly 2000 years ago to a collection of churches in Galatia, somewhere in modern Turkey. In those days of the early Christian church he was writing to tell them there were some things they were doing which were not quite right and there were some things they should think about.

One of the things he said they should think about was this, that as the Spirit worked in their hearts as believers, as He worked to make them like Christ, there would be results. This is the list that Paul has given us of the results of the Spirit's work in their hearts. It is a list for Christians, it is a list for people who believe Christ. It is not exactly something that you need to work at; it is the fruit of the Spirit; it is the result of the Holy Spirit's work in your heart.

But I read it for a different reason. I read it because this is your wedding day and I think that in this list is one of scripture's best descriptions of what a successful marriage looks like — as two Christians come together, both with God's Spirit in their hearts, both with the Spirit working to make them more like Christ day by day.

The first thing in Paul's list is love. Who would not want to be married to someone who knows how to love?

Paul is not using here the word for emotional love that passes. This is the word for long-suffering, devoted, self-sacrificing love. Who would not want to be married for the rest of their life to someone who knew how to love like that?

Who would not want to be married to someone who for the rest of their life had joy in their heart? There are shared joys ahead for you. It is part of family life, it is part of married life, joy. But who would not want to be married to a partner who has a deep-rooted joy in their heart which comes from God Himself, a joy which can never truly be removed.

Paul says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace. Who does not want peace in their heart? Peace in their marriage? Peace in their home? Peace with God. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.

Then he has something else to say which is not quite so attractive to us at times. He says the fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering. Long-suffering, patience, tolerance. At times you will need it. You will need it with each other, you will need it with your families, you will need it with each other's families. Long-suffering, it is a fruit of the Spirit and God gives it to you. You will need kindness and He gives you that. Who would not want to be married to someone who was kind? Who would not want to be married to someone who was good? Who would not want to be married to someone who knew what fidelity meant, who was faithful to their marriage, faithful to their vows, faithful to their promise?

Who would not want to be married to someone who was meek and had self-control?

Meekness is not weakness. To be meek is not weak. To be gentle is not weak. Jesus was meek and He is the strongest Man I know.

This is a list of things to consider, a list of things that make a marriage work. It works because two souls both know Christ. Two souls both have the Spirit working in them. Two souls have the Spirit serving to make you like this.

Sehyeon and Rhoda, this is your wedding day. This is a day for love and for joy. And those are the first two things in Paul's list. Love and joy are gifts from God which lift the human spirit and make us sing to Him.

Tim Pons

*These words were given at the marriage of Sehyeon Kim and Rhoda Greeves, Belfast, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2016*

## **Poetry selection**

### **A MARRIAGE HYMN**

Lord Jesus who didst once appear  
To grace a marriage feast,  
We now beseech Thy presence here,  
To make this wedding blest.  
With grace the bride and bridegroom speed;  
Thy love their pattern be;  
May heart with heart be true indeed,  
As knit, O Lord, in Thee.  
With gifts of grace their hearts endow,  
Of all rich dowries blest;  
Their substance bless, and peace bestow,  
To sweeten all the rest.

In purest love their souls unite,  
That they with Christ-like care  
May make each other's burden light,  
By taking mutual share.  
And looking to their heavenly home,  
O may they dwell each day  
As heirs of life till Thou shalt come  
To take Thy bride away.

John Berridge (1716 – 1793)

## **Testimony Section**

### **THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BETHEL FLAG**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first use of the “Bethel flag” which on that day in 1817 was hoisted aboard the coal-carrying brig “Zephyr” by Captain T. Hindhulph in the Pool of London to show that a Christian meeting was to be held on his ship that Sunday evening.

To understand what happened that day we have to go back to a Sunday in 1814 when Zebedee Rogers, a shoemaker, noticed a man weeping during the sermon in the Wesleyan chapel, Rotherhithe, south east London. Because of his own experience when he was seeking salvation, Rogers took a great interest in anyone in soul trouble so he went to speak with the man who turned out to be David Simpson, the captain of the coal-carrying brig “Friendship”, then moored in the Pool of London. In those days the Lower Pool – that part of the River Thames from Rotherhithe to Limehouse - was often crowded with boats bringing coal from Newcastle to London.

As a result of Rogers’ contact a link was formed between the two men. David Simpson continued to attend the Rotherhithe chapel whenever the “Friendship” was unloading coal in the Pool. Rogers was also invited aboard the collier. During one of these visits, Rogers asked Simpson whether the crew would be



willing to join in prayer and the captain suggested that he ask them. Rogers went on deck but instead of asking the crew whether they would pray, he told them that they were all wanted in the cabin below. Somewhat surprised, but assuming it was an order from the captain, they all went below where Rodgers read from the Bible, prayed and persuaded the captain to pray as well.

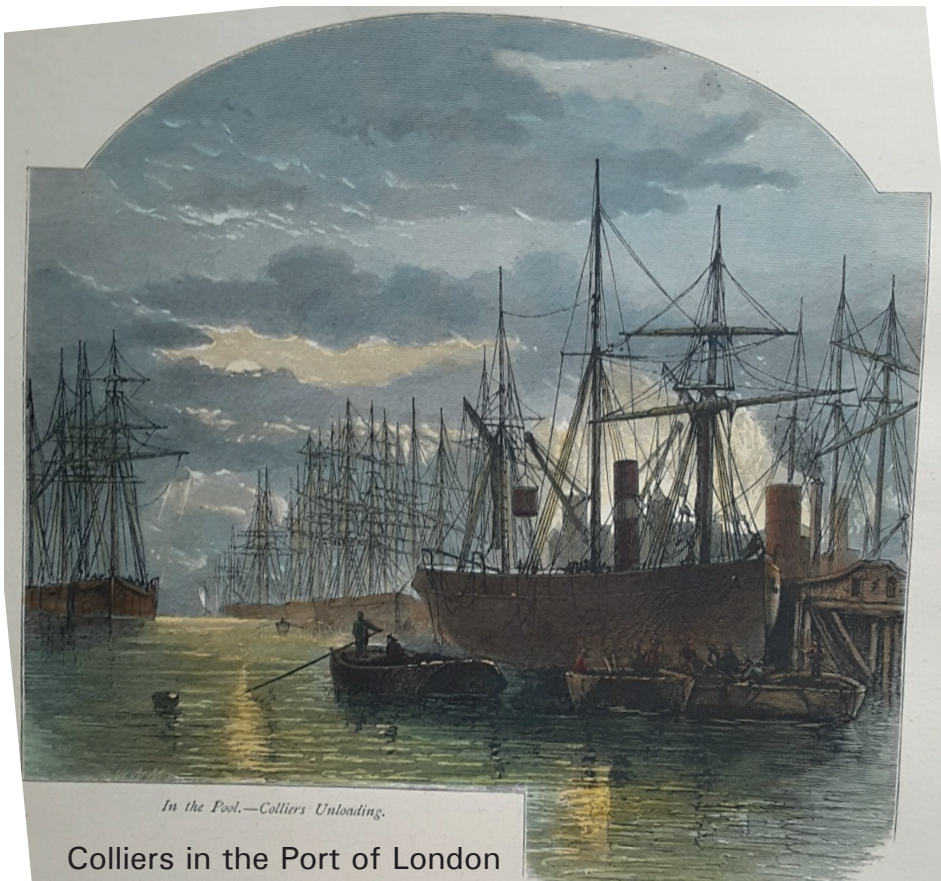
News of this got around and Rogers was invited on to other colliers. His father had been a coal measurer and had often taken his young son on board

the boats as he went about his work, so Rogers felt quite at home going round the ships, praying, reading the Bible, telling others what the Lord had done for him and inviting seamen to come to the Rotherhithe chapel.

With increasing numbers of sailors coming to services the chapel became overcrowded so Samuel Jennings, a prosperous timber merchant, who lived nearby, extended and converted his stable to be used for services on Sundays with an additional meeting on Wednesdays. This latter was so well attended that Wednesday came to be known as "Mr Jennings night".

As 1816 came to a close Anthony Wilkins, a Christian serving on another collier, rowed over to the "Juno" and asked captain Mortain for permission to hold a meeting. About sixty men attended and eleven prayed. The sight of the cabin boy publically praying for forgiveness so moved captain Mortain that he fell on his knees and did the same.





*In the Pool.—Colliers Unloading.*

## Colliers in the Port of London

With so much interest and with shipboard meetings being held most nights on different boats it was agreed that a flag was required to identify which ship was hosting the meeting on a particular evening. Zebedee Rogers remembered the word "Bethel" from the Bible but wondered what it meant. When his sister told him it meant "House of God" he at once felt that was what the flag should be. A seaman cut out the letters, Anthony Wilkins provided a blue backing cloth and Zebedee's sister stitched the flag together. On Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1817 the flag was hoisted on the "Zephyr" and the first "Bethel meeting" was held that evening.

On most days thereafter in the Lower Pool, with the exception of Wednesday – “Mr Jennings night” - little groups of men would be seen rowing across to the brig flying the Bethel flag. Of course, there were seamen who jeered and derided those who attended such meetings. Sometimes men from other ships threw bits of coal at the rowers or tried to splash them. Rumours got around that the meetings were plotting against the king and on one occasion the port authorities raided a prayer meeting and accused the ship’s captain of sedition. Still the true work of God went on.

Thomas Phillips, a Christian living near the Upper Pool, provides an interesting view of how the work of God was proceeding. Late in 1817, told by a friend of the boat loads of seamen converging on the Bethel meetings each night but hardly believing it, he rowed alongside a Bethel ship himself one evening. He found the quarter deck covered with an awning, there being far too many men for all to get below. As he heard their prayers of thankfulness for mercies received, of sorrow for their sins, and expressions of their trust in Jesus as Saviour he was deeply moved. He made a report on his Bethel ship visit to the Religious Tract Society. The Society published his account and the resulting publicity meant that the Bethel flag eventually became accepted in many parts of the world to identify where Christian work, focussed particularly on the needs of sailors, was provided.

## **AN ACT OF FAITH**

This is a story where the key event happened nearly 180 years ago, yet it has a timeless relevance since it is about faith and the influence of that faith on the life of a believer.

Montague Stanley was a hugely successful actor. When he was fifteen he made his first stage appearance in a theatre in York. By the time he was twenty-one he was performing to great

acclaim in Dublin and subsequently he had similar success in London and in Edinburgh.

In 1836, through the witness of his brother-in-law, who had come to faith in Christ in India, Stanley came to trust personally in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and there began to be a real change in his life. His diary entry for the first day of 1837 is revealing. He wrote:

*"My first resolution, by the grace of God, is, that henceforth I will lead a new life ...in Christ, and may the Almighty, of His infinite mercy and grace, confirm this in me evermore through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN"*

Far from forgetting his resolution, in the final entry for the year Stanley wrote:

*"I thank God for His infinite and boundless mercies to my soul. The year had brought with its termination the comforting reflection, that to the best of my frail abilities the resolution made at the commencement has not been lost, though my sins have often drawn me back. But thanks to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ I am a new creation in Him."*

Despite these entries, Stanley was uneasy. He was successful, acclaimed and earning good money from acting but he was ill at ease with himself. A struggle was going on; was his life to be for Christ, or for the world? He felt, to use his own words, that his position "was inconsistent with the high and heavenly principles which the life-giving Spirit of God had revealed to him". Yet, what was he to do? He had a wife and a family to support and if he left the theatre he could be plunged into poverty.

The year 1838 was to be the turning point. After months of consideration he decided to act in simple faith and with a strong confidence in God. He felt from practical daily experience a growing conviction that he could not consistently maintain a Christian walk so long as he was engaged in the acting profession. He felt that he was engaged in a profession where

the name of God was not recognised except to be blasphemed and also that, with a few distinguished exceptions, the lives of actors were directly opposed to the glorious truths which were now the light of his soul. His diary entry for 14<sup>th</sup> February 1838 records his decision:

*"Having resolved to quit the theatrical profession as contrary to the will of God, I this evening told [the theatre management] and decided upon a step which I feel assured the Almighty will bless, since it is for His glory and honour that I take it – trusting entirely to God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen"*

Montague Stanley made his last stage appearance on 28<sup>th</sup> April and that night wrote in his diary with evident relief:

*"Last night of my dramatic career, and now thanks be to God who hath called me from darkness to light; I am emancipated from a most ungodly profession. May the Lord bless and prosper me in my new one"*

Stanley had always had ability to draw and paint so he started to earn a living by painting and giving lessons in drawing, elocution, flute playing and fencing; of this latter he was a master. As time went on and he gained more pupils he focussed on painting and drawing. As for so much else in this account, his diary shows the result of his change of employment. At the end of 1838 he records that he had prayed to God that he might have success in these alternative ways of earning a living and that God had been pleased to grant it.

The family lived at Ascog, a small village on the west coast of Scotland. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1844 Stanley returned home from Edinburgh where he had been exhibiting his pictures. He was not feeling too well; once home his condition deteriorated and a month later, when he was only thirty-five, he was taken to be with the Lord.

## A Voice from the Past

### "HE BRINGETH THEM TO THEIR DESIRED HAVEN"

Psalm 107:23-32

What I specially desire to commend to our beloved brother and sister is verse 30: *"Then they are glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven"*. The thought before me is, What is the desired haven? What is the paramount purpose of the heart of our beloved brother and sister? What is the thing you are looking for? What is the thing you have most before you? It is clear how the Lord comes in, He brings them to the desired haven. Many may be the trials, many the difficulties, but if your heart is set on Him, He will bring you to the place you desire to come to.

You get the principle in the manna. It was gathered before the sun was up. The principle is this, What is the purpose of the heart? It is not what may come in between, but what you seek you will find, you will get in the long run. In Ezekiel the Lord says to the people that He will answer them by their idols. If that is the first thing in your mind, your idols, you will be answered by that...

Well, it is a terrible voyage; but you have the Lord with you in the voyage, and not only so, but the Lord says, What port are you making for? Is it for earthly happiness? To enjoy yourself where the Lord is not? Surely not; He bringeth them to their desired haven. The Lord grant that our beloved ones may have the Lord so simply before them and be able to praise the Lord for His goodness who *"bringeth them to their desired haven"*.

J. B. Stoney

*Word at the marriage of Mr and Mrs Roland Edwards, Hazelville,  
29<sup>th</sup> January 1895*

## A Word for Today

### THE COMING OF THE LORD — PART 4

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

*5:1-11.*

We have the subject of the rapture of the saints brought before us in this scripture, and it is brought before us in relation to the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ; but before I commence to explain the subject, I want to call attention to the mode of the presentation of the coming of Christ in the previous chapters of this epistle.

You will find in the first chapter that the characteristic of every believer is that he is waiting for God's Son from heaven: *"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come". (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)*. Now, whether we accept this or not, it is true, because, as you will see, these converts were converted to this expectation; they had turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. It is a solemn thing, for if you and I are found waiting for God's Son from heaven, it must affect us practically very much in our daily life.

As I said in an earlier address, we so often forget the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me put the question again to you. 'In how many hearts has it been present to-day—the Lord may return before the evening?' Yet, as it is stated in this scripture, that is the characteristic of every believer to expect Christ. Again let me remind you it must affect us, and will affect us, if we are brought under the power of that truth. It is not a doctrine; it is a part and parcel of Christianity, and, consequently, if I am not waiting for God's Son from heaven, I am not on true Christian ground. It is therefore of the utmost

importance that we should understand the truth as stated in this first chapter.

There are two other things in the next two chapters. The first is the bearing of this teaching upon service. Let me read two verses at the end of the second chapter. *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)*. You will thus see in the apostle’s activity that he always had the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ before him; and may I not say, therefore, that we never labour in the Lord’s service, as He would have us to labour, without this motive power. Here I find the apostle full of energy, and he desires the conversion of those to whom he was sent, and he labours indefatigably in the prospect of the coming of Christ.

This was his one desire, that he might present his converts before the Lord, and he says, *“Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?”* Then he adds, *“Ye are our glory and joy”*. You will see, therefore, the effect on service. How wonderful it is! And I may say again, I don’t think I can undertake any activity properly unless this blessed truth is dominating my soul, and then in the prospect of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ I labour devotedly; and why do I thus labour? Because I want His approval. Because it is at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ that the responsibility of the saints will be dealt with. Earth is the scene of our responsibility, and the coming of Christ is the goal to which we look, as we read in the First Epistle of Timothy, *“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Timothy 6:14)*. Earth is the scene of the responsibility, and when the Lord appears in glory He will display the recompense. That is what I understand by the apostle’s statement—*“Ye are our glory and joy.”*



Now, to enlarge upon that, I want to call attention to two verses in the third chapter. There we see the bearing of the coming of Christ upon the spiritual life. *"The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints"* (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). There are two things here: there is holiness at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints before God and our Father; and there is love one toward another. That is the wonderful secret! Loving one another is the way of holiness. You may talk to me about holiness from morning to night, but you will never grow in it if there is a lack of love, because love is the nature of God, and God's love is a holy love; hence it comes to pass, as the apostle teaches us here, that if we love one another - and the more we love one another the more we shall grow in conformity to the image of Christ—the more holy we shall become. I use those last two terms interchangeably for this reason—because the idea of holiness is conformity to the image of Christ, nothing short of that. Well then, if that be so, you will see from this scripture that the more we love one another (because that is the expression of the nature of God) the more we shall grow in holiness, and that will be brought out into display at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Now I dare say there are some here who have sometimes said, 'We have not so much energy in the Spirit as we would like to have', and others will say, 'We are really doing nothing for the Lord'. Ah, the reason of that is you have not the coming of Christ before your soul. If you are living in the prospect of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ you will be devoted. As the apostle puts it in another place, *"The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should*



*not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).* All that we are as children of Adam has gone in the death of Christ, and now Christ only fills the eye of God, and Christ only can fill the affections of the souls of God’s people; and then when the divine nature is in activity in the power of the Spirit, there is an immense growth in holiness, and the prospect of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is a great incentive to it. It has an immense bearing upon the spiritual life; indeed, I may say what I said about service, no one is living properly as a Christian, no one can do so, unless he has the prospect of seeing the Lord face to face.

Now, that is a very strong statement so let me give a scripture to sustain it. The apostle John says, *“It is not yet manifested what we shall be”* (there is now no outward display of what we are as the children of God), *“but we know that when He is manifested we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is”*; then he adds, *“Every one that hath this hope in Him”* (that is, Christ) *“purifies himself, even as he is pure” (see 1 John 3:2-3).* Yes, the prospect of seeing Him and of being like Him will be constant power acting upon the soul, so that you will get rid of everything that is unsuited to Him, and you will desire to acquire everything that is suited to Him, that you may rejoice in the day of His appearing. Well, you see the immense bearing of this truth upon the spiritual life.

Now I come to our chapter. It bears upon bereavement, for that leads to what we get in this chapter. I will tell you how it works out. Some of these saints had died, and these believers had not the truth of the rapture, that is, the saints being caught up in the cloud to meet the Lord in the air; and they thought the saints who had died had lost something because they had died. They began to mourn; they thought that those who had died would not be here for the glory of the kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, and in order to meet that difficulty the Lord Jesus

makes a special revelation to the heart of the apostle.

Let me read verses 13 and 14 again. Now I want you to attend to these two verses. Where the apostle says, *"Them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him,"* it means at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. How can that come about if they had died and departed to be with Christ? How is it possible that they will be brought back with the Lord Jesus when He returns? Now it is we get the special revelation in order to make that plain, and so the apostle proceeds, *"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord"* (that is, a special revelation from the Lord had been made to him), *"that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall in no way anticipate those which have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (vv. 15-17).

Now before I speak of the manner of the coming, I want to call attention to the two classes which the apostle indicates. There are many saints who may die before the coming of the Lord; many have died, they have departed to be with Christ, and it is one of the most remarkable things in Scripture that we have no unfolding of the state of those who have departed to be with Christ. We only know that they are with Him. Blessedness enough, surely! We have no description, and no details given about their condition. We are told they are, *"Absent from the body, present with the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 5:8): and that *"To depart and be with Christ, which is very much better"* (Philippians 1:23). The only thing we know, therefore, about the millions of saints who have passed away is that they are with Christ, which is very much better. Ah, it is very much better! We have no description of their state of blessedness, and the only thing, I repeat, we know is that they are now with

the Lord. Now, many of us may die, we don't know; we are here to-night but before another week it may be that some of us may pass away to be with the Lord, but if we die we pass away to be with Him. It is not death at all, death is ours.

I suppose some of you have watched a dying believer. I have often done so, and the most wonderful thing that has presented itself to me as I have so watched is that when the last pulse beats that soul is with the Lord. It shows not only the Lord's triumph over death, but His triumph over death in the saints, so that you stand by the bedsides and say, 'They are with the Lord'. There is no possible interval, for, I repeat, death is gone for the believer. Some one once wrote to G. V. Wigram, 'You will be grieved to hear that our dear sister So-and-so has died.' He wrote back, 'Died! No, she has gone to a fuller life. I can't conceive of our sister having died, she is living as she has never lived before.' So, if we are called upon to die, it is only closing our eyes upon this scene and opening them in the presence of the Lord.

Well, there is another class—those who will not die. The apostle speaks of those who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord. We do not know whether we will be among them but Scripture teaches that there is nothing between the present moment and the return of the Lord Jesus. There is thus a possibility of His coming at any moment, and we should never forget the immediacy of the Lord's return, so that we might be living daily in the expectation of it.

Now I will say a word about the manner of the Lord's coming. *"For the Lord himself with an assembling shout... shall descend from heaven"*. It is a shout to assemble those whom He is coming to fetch. Then we have the voice of the archangel; that is, the expression of His power; and, thirdly, the trump of God. In 1 Corinthians 15 we get the last trump, but here it simply says *"the trump of God."* It is the signal to march to be caught up by divine power to meet the Lord in the air. That is how the

Lord may come at any moment; but remember this, that when we speak of this coming here it is not Christ's public coming; the world will know nothing about it, they will not hear the shout of Christ. The shout is for those who are dead, to assemble them prior to their being caught up with the living saints. That is the first thing when the Lord returns; all the saints who have died are brought out of their graves. Now mark what follows. *"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"* (v. 17).

Now there is another thing not given in this scripture. In 1 Corinthians 15 we read (I refer to it that you may have the whole truth), *"We shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed... For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility,, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the word written: Death is swallowed up in victory"* (1 Corinthians 15:53-54). What a moment that will be! We which are alive and remain shall be changed, a wave of resurrection life and power will pass over us, all that is mortal will pass out of us, with all the corruption, and every one of us will be like the Lord. That may take place at any moment. If the Lord were to return while I am speaking of Him here to-night, that wave of resurrection life would pass over every believer, and leave us with bodies like the Lord. It is thus a wonderful statement we get here. Then mark one word, it shows the force of the passage, *"shall be caught up together with them"* (v. 16). The dead are raised and the living changed, and they are caught up *together* in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. What a marvellous thing it is!

Then will take place what we spoke of at the commencement.

The apostle says, *"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him"* (v. 14). The saints have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; they are with Him, and at the due time He will return with all who have been caught up to be with Him.

I have one word to say regarding the foundation on which this all rests. It rests on the simple statement in verse 14, *"If we believe that Jesus died and rose again."* It was through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, *"and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Hebrews 2:15). Christ has gained a complete victory over all the power of the enemy in His death; He is the triumphant One as risen out of death, and not for Himself only, because He died for His people, and so He is the Victor over death and the grave for you and for me. So everything is based upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the great foundation on which our souls rest. We know, therefore, that if Christ has died and has risen again, we, if we die, we shall be raised out of our graves. The resurrection of the saints follows upon the resurrection of Christ, as the apostle says, *"Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming"* (1 Corinthians 15:23). He has rescued us from the power of the enemy, and He holds us in His hands, so that if we die His hand will reach us in the grave, we shall be raised out of it, our bodies will be changed, and we shall be like Him.

Now I cannot conceive a more wonderful thing to influence us than this. We need some such influence. We go about, and work, and get under the power of the cares of this scene, and forget the wonderful prospect we have before us; we become worldly. How can we if we are expecting the coming of Christ? We go in for worldly amusements. How can we if we are waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? No! we should say, the Lord might come in the midst of it. And what then? As Peter says, *"Be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in*

*peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14).*

Now I want to say a word in regard to the relation of this to the appearing. We are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and we go in with Him. The first act of Christ when we are caught up is to introduce us into the Father's house; then if we go in with Him it is in order to come out with Him, and, beloved, if I love the appearing of Christ, I shall rejoice at this prospect of His coming out, and I will tell you why. If I think of the rapture of the saints, of necessity I begin to think of what I get, but when I think of the appearing, I begin to think of what *He* will get. Is it no joy for us to remember that in this very scene where He was crucified, rejected, and cast out, He will triumph, that He will have His rights in the very scene where He was rejected? He said, *"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32). That will never be fulfilled until He has come back; every one then will bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father (see Philippians 2:11). Further, if I confine my thoughts to the rapture, I do not get the scope of Scripture, and I do not enter into communion with the heart of God. Remember this, the whole universe is to be flooded with the glory of God, it is to be a universe of bliss. How is that to be brought about? Only by Christ coming out with His own, and then the whole universe will be in accord with the mind of God. It is then everything will resound to the praise of Him whose counsel it was that everything in heaven and in earth should be headed up under Christ. This wonderful prospect of everything in heaven and in earth being headed up under Christ should rejoice our hearts; He, the Supreme One; and He will retain that supremacy until the end of the kingdom, and then, as we get in I Corinthians 15, He will deliver up the kingdom. He will have reduced everything to submission to Himself, everything will have been put under His feet, and when that consummation is reached, then it is He will deliver up the kingdom He has won, and over

which He has reigned, and the object will be that God may be all in all.

I cannot go into chapter 5, but I will point out the connection of it that you may understand it. The first five verses refer to the appearing of Christ—the day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is this, it introduces the reign of Christ. It always has the aspect of judgment, because when it is introduced Christ will put down all things that are opposed to God. That is the first part of the reign of Christ, He comes in judgment. If you read Isaiah 2 you will see that the day of the Lord is against everything that lifts itself up against the supremacy of God. Everything opposed to God will be dealt with in judgment, and then it is we get the day of Christ, when everything will be in subjection to Him; and so the apostle reminds us here that while the day of the Lord will come as a thief upon those who are not watching, that is, upon the unconverted here, still, as he goes on to say, *“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness”* (vv. 4, 5). Since we are the children of the day now, we are to live according to the day to which we belong, for the moral characteristics of that day have to be displayed in and through the saints of God, and you get exhortations consequent upon that. You see it in verse 6: *“Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him ”* (vv. 6-10).

Now one word upon the double exhortation that we get in verse

11: *"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another"*. Well, as I said, many of the saints have passed away, and, if we are tempted to mourn over them, the apostle gives us these words at the direction of the Lord for our comfort, as he says in the last verse of the fourth chapter, *"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."* Are they lost because they have died? No; their spirits are with Christ, their bodies are crumbling in the grave, but we know that when the Lord comes He will call them out of their graves, and will give them bodies like His own; and that will be the complete and final triumph of Christ in redemption. In the meantime it is *"comfort one another"*; and we are to edify one another, that is, I apprehend, build up one another in the truth the apostle has brought before us. What a hope it is to have this wonderful prospect, and yet I am afraid that it has faded away somewhat from our hearts and minds. I know, alas! in my own heart how easy it is to lose it, to be satisfied with things here; but God has some better thing in store for us—we must not forget it—and we shall be introduced into it when the moment comes.

Oh, that God would so work as to revive in all our hearts the expectation of the coming of Christ! I believe it would revive us in a wonderful way if you and I and all the saints of God were in the power of it. It would deliver us from the tyranny of present things, and our hearts would be drawn up to the place where Christ is, and we should find that to be our true circle—where He is—and then we should realise the truth of that passage we had last week, *"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:21).

May God speak to us today and awaken us for His Name's sake.

Edward Dennett (1831 – 1914)  
*This concludes the series*