



## **Living Water**

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

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

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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 142**

*(July – August 2017)*

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*This article is based on selected highlights of a reading with David McIntyre at Hampton, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016.*

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## Recent Ministry

### **THE GLORY OF CHRIST – THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF**

***As Christians, one thing which we should learn more about is God's appreciation of Christ.***

Our initial salvation is a great and wonderful topic, but it is only the beginning of our experience with God. To really appreciate what is in God's heart, we need to understand God's viewpoint. We need to understand how precious the Lord Jesus Christ is in the sight of God.

We have an example of the effect of this in Luke 24, with the two on the way to Emmaus. They were walking away from Jerusalem, saddened by everything that had happened. The Lord Jesus came alongside them and "interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself", starting "*from Moses and from all of the prophets*" (Luke 24:27). The result was that their hearts burned within them. They turned around and immediately returned to their fellow believers in Jerusalem. So, we need to be filled with the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed to us through God's word. We need to spend time with Him, learning more about how precious He is before God.

To inspire us with the 'things concerning himself', we will look at four 'types' (or illustrations) from the Old Testament. Each one is a picture for us, teaching us some of the ways in which the Lord Jesus Christ is so delightful to God.

#### **The Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1:1-9)**

***The preciousness of Christ as committed to the will of God – even to death.***

The offerings were given by God to show us how we must approach Him. In each case, they refer to some aspect of the preciousness of the Christ.

Note that God begins with the burnt offering. We would have

begun with the sin offering, because that is our way in to salvation. However, God's focus is on the preciousness of that perfect One who was entirely devoted to God's will.

## **Do we understand how precious Christ is to God?**

The burnt offering is described in Leviticus 1:9 as *"an offering by fire to Jehovah of a sweet odour"*. The Lord Jesus Christ was always committed to the will of God and this was most precious shown when He offered Himself up in death. His death is described in the New Testament as *"an offering and sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour"* (Ephesians 5:2). It is this which God appreciates, and it is this and only this which is suitable for us to bring into God's presence.

The person who was making the offering had to place their hand on the head of the offering. They had to be associated with it – make it their own. Then the whole offering was offered to God with nothing held back. This is something given voluntarily and completely to God.

In just the same way, we have to reflect on what appreciation of Christ we have from our own experience with Him. Do we have an appreciation of the Father's delight in His Son? Do we understand how precious Christ is to God? If we do, it will colour our praise and thanksgiving to God.

We should come into the Father's presence with our hearts and souls full of Christ, full of what He has accomplished for God, full of His love. Then we are occupied not with ourselves, our failings or even our blessings – but we are occupied with what God values, occupied with the perfection of His beloved Son.

The offering is perfect – without blemish. While we may feel that our appreciation is too small or incomplete, we can take encouragement from the service of the Lord Jesus when we make our offerings.

He made the greatest, most perfect offering Himself. He now takes whatever offering we are able to make, and makes it suitable for the service of God. Further down the chapter in Leviticus 1, there are smaller sizes of offerings – all the way down to a bird. In this case, there is something which has to be removed before it is offered – but it is still made into an acceptable offering.

The challenge to us is whether we are bringing the biggest offering that we are able to; if we are only able to bring a bird then a bird is acceptable but if we are able to bring a bullock then a bullock is what we should bring. Of course in our day it is not a physical offering but it is a fullness of praise and worship flowing to God from our hearts.

## **The Oblation (Leviticus 2:1-13)**

### ***The preciousness of Christ as a dependent Man.***

The oblation (or meal offering) speaks of Christ's life here and the preciousness of that life in the eye of heaven. It speaks of a Man moving in the will of God, absolutely in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. There had never been a life like it. Christ was the only Man who brought perfection to manhood. He presented to God what God had been looking for from man. We can see this in any of the gospels, but it is particularly seen in Luke's gospel, bringing out the truth of *"the holy thing which shall be born"* (Luke 1:35).

Think of the holiness of Christ and the evenness of His life – the fine flour mingled with oil. Every thought, every word, every action of His was in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every part of the life of Christ was delightful to heaven.

The frankincense was the savour that arose to the blessed God. Think of how, as the fire was applied to the frankincense, the incense would arise.

However, we should be careful as well. The offering reminds us *"it is the most holy of Jehovah's offerings"* (Leviticus 2:3). While

we are contemplating the glory of the One who was here in manhood, we must never forget who He is in His holy Person. He is God, manifest in flesh. It is good advice not to try to think of Christ's deity at the same time as we consider His manhood but we ought never to forget the greatness of His Godhead glory. That is a subject too big to explore in detail here.

So how can we offer our oblation to God? This offering was pre-prepared by the person offering it. Each of us have to ask ourselves how much of my life is surrendered to Christ – how much have I prepared at home? How much have I meditated upon Christ in private?

The instruction *"the remainder of the oblation shall be Aaron's and his sons'"* (Leviticus 2:3) shows us that the contemplation of the life of Christ down here is intended to nourish our souls and build us up towards His pattern. John speaks of contemplating Him. As part of our preparation at home, we need to spend time contemplating that life that was so delightful to heaven.

Leviticus also reminds us that the oblation had to be offered with salt and without leaven or honey. There is no place for our natural selves as we offer what is of Christ to God. Not the leaven, which symbolises the working of the human mind and natural influences in the things of God, and not the honey, which symbolises the sweetness of natural affection. Neither our bad nor our good aspects have any place here.

The only thing which has place is the salt, which is a preservative and was not to be lacking. We need self-judgement of our natural state before we are able to offer our appreciation of the perfect manhood of Christ as an oblation to God.

## **The Brazen Serpent (Numbers 21:4-9)**

***Christ being made sin for us.***

The previous two types are very beautiful thoughts. They were about how we can be occupied with God's delight in His only begotten Son – both in His complete committal to the will of

God and in the perfection of His manhood.

Despite these being very high thoughts it is open to us to bring something to God as appreciating what the Lord Jesus Christ is to God. As noted earlier, each offering had a range of sizes so whatever stage we are on our Christian pathway there is something we should be able to offer.

When we start out on our Christian pathway, we do not know anything about God's thoughts or the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ in His sight. We start with the Brazen Serpent (and linked with this is the Sin Offering in Leviticus 4, which we are not covering in detail here) which allows us to be in God's presence without condemnation.

The historical backdrop to this event was a great victory over the Canaanites (v.3). God had delivered His people from their enemy. And yet the people grew impatient and spoke out against God and against Moses. They even spoke out against the manna, the food which God has provided for them, saying, *"our soul loathes this light bread"* (v.5).

The punishment was swift – fiery serpents were sent among the people. However, when the people turned back to Him, God instructed Moses to make a brazen serpent. Anyone who looked to that brazen serpent lived.

It reminds us of the solemn work of the Lord Jesus, who was obedient even to death.

The fiery serpents speak to us of the action of sin, which brings death to us all. God has condemned sin in the flesh (see Romans 8) and we are unable to do anything to help ourselves.

If we are to be saved, God's condemnation had to be taken by One who was completely righteous. Jesus was without sin, but He took our sins upon Himself – just like Moses lifted up an image of the very thing that was biting the people, so He was lifted up and made sin for us (see also John 3:14-16 and 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Like the people who were bitten by serpents, we cannot do



anything to help ourselves. We need to look in faith at the One who was made sin for us and believe that as we trust in Him He has made things right before God on our behalf.

However, there are other solemn lessons in this passage of scripture, even if we are established Christians who know the blessing of salvation. It teaches us about the unreliability of the flesh – the natural man. It is a lesson which takes many of us a long time to learn. Even though we should know better, many of us still expect something from our natural selves.

Do we still value what God has provided for us? The people here had lost their appreciation for the manna that God has provided for sustenance. To help us focus on the importance of this, let's look again at the brazen serpent. Do we really understand what it meant to the Lord Jesus to be made sin? He was made sin for us, the One who was without sin, the One who was ever pleasurable to the blessed God when He was here. He experienced the horror of being made into something so alien to Him. (see Luke 22:41-45 for His feelings in anticipation of this). He measured sin's distance. We cannot do that, we can only praise the One who did.

The moment we receive Christ into our hearts, God regards us as having died with Him. *"For ye have died, and your life is hid with the Christ in God"* (Colossians 3:3). If we have truly died with Him, we will want to live with Him and live like Him. We will want to rely on Him, and not want to rely on ourselves.

## **The Ark of the Covenant (Joshua 3:2-4,14-17)**

### ***The glory of the Person of the Christ.***

The ark is a beautiful type of Christ, one of the finest. It is something which we could spend a lot of time exploring in its own right, far beyond the scope we can cover here. The ark reinforces the uniqueness of the Person of the Christ and is a reminder of His holy glory.

At the start of their journey through the wilderness, the children

# The call is to follow the ark

of Israel left Egypt by crossing the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). This links to the thought of the brazen serpent in the section above. Both looking on the serpent and crossing the Red Sea represent our being delivered from sin, but remaining on earth – often referred to for the Christian as: ‘in the world but not of the world’. It is a time where we build our experiences with Christ, a time where we grow and develop in our appreciation of His wonderful Person.

The scripture in Joshua deals with the end of this wilderness journey. The children of Israel were finally going to enter the promised land. To enter, they had to cross the Jordan – but they have the ark with them. The call is to follow the ark. The people had to have the desire to get up and follow it in order to enter into the blessing. When they followed it, they saw that the impassable Jordan was made to give way in the presence of the ark. They were able to pass through on dry ground.

It is important for us to see that this is a call to affection. Moses represented authority, but he did not take the people into the land. It is their affection which takes them in to the land, following the ark.

The ultimate fulfilment of this scripture is when a believer dies. They enter into the spiritual land, to be where Christ is. The barrier of death (represented here by the Jordan) is no barrier at all when they follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ since He has gone before and broken the power of death for everyone who believes.

However, there is also something that we as believers should be enjoying now. We are on earth, but we can look and see the Lord Jesus where He is now, glorified at God’s right hand.

It is for this reason that we are told *“if therefore ye have been raised with the Christ, have your mind on the things that are above, where the Christ is” (Colossians 3:1 (see also v.2,3))*

We have to understand the glory of His Person. The more we are occupied with Him, the more we appreciate Him. We will be drawn by affection to follow after Him and we will want to be with Him and like Him.

\*\*\*\*\*

The preciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ should fill our souls – we can see the One in whom God delights.

- the One who perfectly and completely committed Himself to the will of God.
- the One who brought perfection to manhood
- the One who was made sin for us
- the One who in His glory leads the way into God’s presence

May we each take advantage of these pictures which God has given to us, to help us grow in our appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Tim Painter

*This article is based on selected highlights of a reading with David McIntyre at Hampton, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016.*

**THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 5**  
**(Highlights of a Bible Reading)**

**Introduction**

At the beginning of the chapter the Lord goes up the mountain and the disciples come to Him. They are attracted to Him, and the Lord starts a course of teaching that continues to the end of chapter 7. The Lord is setting out the principles of the kingdom. The chapter can be summarised as follows:

Verses 1-12    The character and portion of those who come into the kingdom.

Verses 13-16   The position of such persons in the world.

Verses 17-46   The connection between the principles of the kingdom and the law.

Running through the chapter is a further theme: the introduction of the Father's name. Jesus puts His disciples in connection with His Father, as their Father. He reveals to them the Father's name in order that they may be in relation with Him, and that they may act in accord with what He is.

## **The character and portion of those who come into the kingdom.**

The chapter commences with a list of things that are *"blessed"*. *"Blessed the poor in spirit"*, *"Blessed those who hunger and thirst after righteousness"*, and so on. Every feature in the list is seen in perfection in the Lord Jesus as Man here.

It is striking that the list starts with a reference to *"poor in spirit"*. It is an unusual expression but would indicate those who are marked by dependence on God and do not rely on themselves, their own achievements and importance. We get examples of such persons in the Bible. The Queen of Sheba, whose story is given in 1 Kings, is one example. We are told that *"when the Queen of Sheba saw all Solomon's wisdom... there was no more spirit in her"* (1Kings 10:4-5). She realised that she did not measure up in any way to the glory of Solomon and that he was far greater than anything that she had been told. It reduced her from all her importance as Queen of Sheba. That is what a view of Christ in all His greatness will do for us. Job is another Old Testament example. When God ends His first word to him, Job responds, *"I am naught"* (Job 40:4). When God concludes his second speech, Job says: *"I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes"* (Job 42:6).

In the New Testament we read of a man who *"would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, O God, have compassion on me the sinner"* (Luke 18:13). These examples show us how, *"poor in spirit"* is brought about in our own soul history.

The Pharisees and Sadducees provide a negative example. They

had an outward religion with a great deal of show and self promotion but the Lord shows that the kingdom is not given to those who think a lot of themselves.

The spirit displayed by a believer is very important. It shows up in the way that things are done, the way we may get on with one

another, and in the testimony of our Lord. The whole spirit of a Christian is to be influenced by Christ – changed according to the kingdom that we have come into. It makes the believer different from the world, in their ways, and in the type of reward that they look for. Peter tells us about *“a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price” (1 Peter 3:4)*. The Lord said, *“I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29)*. People were drawn to Christ because of the spirit which He showed. None of the features listed in these opening verses of the chapter would look good on a job application. They are not features which lead to success in this world but they are a testimony to God Himself.

### **The position of such persons in the world.**

The Lord follows on from these statements to show how His own were to be in this world. The references to *“Salt”* and *“Light”* are a challenge to us, for these features, seen so perfectly in Christ, are to be seen in us.

Salt is a preservative and light is needed for guidance. The believer is to be a preservative in an evil world but at the same time to be a light to those in the darkness. Peter writes, *“They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same sink of corruption” (1 Peter 4:4)*. Peter is thinking of the moral change that came about as a result of his contact with Christ and how that change had a voice to those around. We read here, *“Let*

**None of the  
features listed  
... would look  
good on a job  
application**

*your light thus shine before men, so that they may see your upright works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens"* (v. 16). It is a test to us to be living our lives in conformity with what we say. It calls for much prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit that the salt may not become saltless or the light become darkness.

The disciples were to learn that all their conduct was to reflect their Father in the heavens and to be for His glory, not their own. This was the pattern set in the Lord's own pathway. He came to do the Father's will and the Father's glory was ever before Him. His words in the garden of Gethsemane, *"Not my will but thine be done"* (Luke 22:42) express it in perfection.

We should note that the Lord uses the term *"your Father"*. The Lord is bringing His own into a real relationship with God as *"Father"*. We are brought into sonship and we are to manifest that relationship in our lives.

## **The connection between the principles of the kingdom and the law.**

This section begins with the Lord saying that He had not *"come to make void the law or the prophets; I am not come to make void, but to fulfil"* (v. 17). It is wonderful to think of the law and the prophets – everything that was set out as to God's mind and purpose was fulfilled in Christ personally.

The Lord brings in a spirit of things that goes beyond the literal words of the law in their moral effect. On six separate occasions He uses the words: *"Ye have heard that it has been said... But I say unto you"*. In relation to adultery, the swearing of oaths and various other matters, the Lord makes a contrast with what was said in the law (or had become the practice) and the moral order that He was establishing. There was nothing wrong with the law; the problem is that the state of our hearts is such that we either distort the law or break it. The knowledge of God revealed in love brings a new motive into the heart. God has

worked in new birth to bring about a new creation in these mortal bodies, an answer through Christ by the Holy Spirit to the mind of God. This is the sense in which the Lord speaks of righteousness which surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees. The Lord goes on to speak of many things such as how we might speak to a brother and how we may be affected by lust and the need for self judgment in such matters. It is all very different from the standards of the world, where some of the things mentioned would hardly be regarded as sins at all. It emphasises that the rule and influence of heaven should show in the life of the believer and is part of the representation of Christ which is to be seen in His church. We can only attain to these high standards with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Lord.

The Lord makes two references to hell here (vv.29 & 30) which is very solemn. It is not that any believer will be in hell, whatever their failure in Christian conduct, but it shows the character and true source of a certain line of things. Where lust is not judged by the believer it becomes destructive of our relations with God and with Christ. We read elsewhere in the scriptures that *"all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world"* (1 John 2:16).

There is an instruction here that we may find puzzling: *"I say unto you not to resist evil"* (v.39). The context seems to be that we are not to resist personal things that are done against us. If we are compelled to go one mile, then we are to go two; if someone strikes you on the cheek, then you are to turn the other. The Lord set the pattern: *"when reviled, reviled not again, when suffering, threatened not"* (1 Peter 2:23). As Christians we are not called to put the world right. The Lord left things here pretty much as they were, but we are called to be subject to Christ and to display something of His spirit.

This shows very much at the end of the chapter where there is

a call to *"pray for those who insult you and persecute you"* (v.44) – a huge challenge which many persecuted Christians in the past and in our own day have been helped to do. The Lord gives the reason for the instruction; it is that *"ye may be sons of your Father who is in the heavens; for he makes his sun rise on evil and good..."* (v.45).

*Highlights of a Bible reading at Bromley, June 2016.*

*God willing, the highlights of a reading on Matthew chapter 6 will be published in the next issue.*

## Poetry Selection

### THE HIDDEN PATH

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. One place have I in heaven above<br>The glory of His throne—<br>On this dark earth, whence He has gone<br>I have one place alone,<br>And if His rest in heaven I know,<br>I joy to find His path below.  | 2. One lonely path across the waste,<br>Thy lowly path of shame;<br>I would adore the wondrous grace<br>That I should tread the same.<br>The Stranger and an alien, Thou –<br>And I a stranger, alien now.         |
| 3. Thy cross a mighty barrier stands<br>Between the world and me –<br>Not yielding with reluctant hands,<br>But glorying to be free,<br>From that which now is dung and dross,<br>Beside Thy glory and Thy cross.   | 4. I see Thee there amidst the light,<br>The Father's blessed Son;<br>I know that I in Thee art there,<br>That light and life mine own.<br>What has this barren world to give,<br>If there in Thy deep joy I live? |
| 5. Sent hither from that glorious home<br>As Thou wast sent before,<br>Of that great love from whence I come<br>To witness evermore,<br>For this would I count all things loss:<br>Thy joy, Thy glory, and Thy cross.<br>Mrs. Frances Bevan (1827 – 1909)<br>Written at Trent Park, Middlesex |  |



## Testimony Section

### A RUSSIAN CALENDAR FOR 2017

As in previous years, another 10,000 Russian calendars were distributed at the beginning of this year. The distribution involved visits to many villages and often begins in the village shop where I start by giving my testimony. One lady who saw the calendars for the first time this year asked for a whole parcel, saying, 'I want to get the same blessing as you have got'. I told her, 'The blessing is not in the calendar, but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.' A man in one village took twenty calendars to give to his friends. He did this last year and was pleased to have the opportunity to give out the calendars again with their gospel message for each month.

Some young folk saw the fine car that formed the picture for June 2017 – see below. Their immediate reaction was to say, 'That is exactly the sort of car I want!' I told them to read the message written underneath the picture and that Satan wanted them to be so occupied with material things that they had no time at all for the things of God. Surprisingly, they agreed!

Here is the picture and its message:



*"And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).*

We all love gifts! Imagine your feelings if you got the gift of such a car and the house! God also promises a special gift – the gift of the Holy Spirit! This gift is impossible to touch or see, but this precious gift we cannot compare with any other, even the most expensive car! The gift of the Holy Spirit makes you aware that

you have come into the family of God and all His blessings belong to you! It is the forgiveness of all your sins and eternal life with the Lord Jesus. Through that gift you come under God's daily care and have the comfort of the Holy Spirit. You have... Oh, there are not enough words to describe all the gifts that God gives! But there is a condition on which the gift is given: "Repent, and be baptised, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ" Have you put your trust in the Saviour? Do not refuse the precious gift from a loving God!

In some of the villages where we went with the 2016 calendar, they were waiting for our visit this year. They appreciate someone taking the time to visit them. I showed them the picture of the little birds in the picture for July and reminded them that however isolated they felt they were not forgotten by God.

July's picture and message are below:



Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? And one of them is not forgotten before God" (Luke 12:6)

In our life there are times when everything seems to fall apart and there seems to be no help or support.

And often this provokes the common expression, 'Probably I am forgotten before God'

Jesus in the gospels uses this example of the birds to encourage us to say, 'No, it is not true! If God remembers and takes care of the birds, I am not forgotten.' According to ornithologists there are about 100 billion birds in the world and none of them is forgotten before God. It is God who has been forgotten by us! We turned away from Him and began to build up our lives

according to our sinful wisdom. We see the result of it:– emptiness, despair, and death in our sins.

Let us believe in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of our sins, talk to Him in our prayers, and tell Him about our problems. We will feel and see that we are not forgotten before God.

Sergey Sidorenko

## A Voice from the Past

### THE SCAPEGOAT

***“And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited”*** (or land of separation) ***“and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness”.*** (*Leviticus 16:20-22*).

Many believers in Jesus do not know that their sins are put away, I had trusted the Saviour some little time before I knew that my sins were put away. I believed that God had forgiven them, and that He would not charge me with them, and it was for Christ’s sake that He had done it. But it was a great joy to me when I saw that they were gone – actually carried out of God’s sight, and removed from before Him by being borne by Jesus. The scapegoat carried the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the children of Israel into a ‘land of separation’. Christ once in the end of the world hath appeared *“to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it was appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many”* (*Hebrews 9:26-28*). We can never know what it cost the blessed Saviour to bear *“our sins*

*in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).* No one could explain the meaning of those simple words *“the sacrifice of himself”*. If we think of His Godhead glory, and of all His perfection in manhood, we may learn something of the greatness of redemption when we see that it could only be accomplished by *“the sacrifice of himself”* – by the absolute surrender of His holy and blessed Person to bear all that was due to us on account of our sins.

Our sins, our guilt, in love divine,  
Confessed and borne by Thee,  
The gall, the curse, the wrath were Thine,  
To set Thy ransomed free.

In that dark hour of utmost sorrow in which He had to cry, *“My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34)* He removed our sins into a ‘land of separation’, from which they can never return. Blessed be His name for this stupendous work of divine love.

*“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:12-14).* Here the perfection of the Saviour’s work shines forth in a glorious way. He has so removed our sins that there is nothing to hinder Him from sitting on the right hand of God. The One who took our sins upon Him is at the right hand of God. Where are our sins? Gone. Eternally gone by His one sacrifice.

The throne of God has no charge against the believer in Jesus. When Christ took His seat at the right hand of God, it was as the One who had glorified God completely about our sins. Hence there is not a cloud above. You may say, ‘But I have many clouds’. That is because you are so low down. Get a little higher up. There are no clouds at the right hand of God, and your Saviour is there. In God’s account there is not a spot left on one

of His children. The nearer the believer comes to God, the more plainly does he see how completely he is cleared by the work of Christ. *"By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"*. We are before God in the uninterrupted and eternal efficacy of that *"one offering"*. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it . It is a perfect offering, and by it we are *"perfected for ever"*. That is, sins can never be put to our account; we are in the efficacy and value of a sacrifice which has removed them all. If we were not *"perfected for ever"* by the offering of Christ, one of two things must happen. We should either be lost, or Christ would have to suffer again to put away the sins which were not taken into account at Calvary. Thank God! The two things are equally impossible. The *"one offering"* has settled the question of our sins, and by it we are *"perfected for ever"*.

This is applied to our consciences by the blessed testimony of the Holy Spirit. *"Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more"* (Hebrews 10: 15-17). The efficacy of the sacrifice is made known to us by this divine testimony. The believer needs no priestly absolution; he has greater witness than that of men.

But some anxious soul will say, 'Ah! That is just what I want. If I had the witness of the Holy Spirit I should be happy and at rest; but alas, I have not that witness'. My friend, you are looking in the wrong place for the Spirit's witness. You must not look within. The witness of the Spirit is not an inward feeling or consciousness of pardon; it is a witness recorded in the imperishable words of Holy Scripture. The witness of the Spirit is not a vague uncertainty of inward consciousness; it is the written testimony that lies plain and clear on the pages of Holy Scripture. What is the witness? It is this: *"Their sins and*

*iniquities I will never remember any more".* Every believer is entitled to know that the question of his sins is divinely and eternally settled. This is one great element of peace with God.  
Charles A. Coates (1852-1945)

## A Word for Today

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### **Part 1 – The circle of fellowship.**

Let us look, first of all, at what appears to have originally characterised the company of those who were privileged to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ after His ascension and subsequent absence from this world. It will be seen, as we proceed, that what this company was at the first, so it is in principle at this moment. Failure and confusion amongst Christians have made no difference in the Lord's thoughts as to His own company here, and therefore those who seek to be true to Him can count fully, and without reserve, upon His faithfulness. Now the reader hardly needs to be reminded that Christ has not yet entered upon His rights here. Whatever may be the thoughts and purposes of God concerning Him, it is only too evident that for the present He has no place here except in the hearts of His own. It is this fact which gives such a depth of meaning to a passage which perhaps has not received the attention it deserves: *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).* We may have occasion to look a little more at this later on, but we may just say now that it throws great light upon the Christian's position, as far as this world is concerned. Why is it that we shew forth His death? Why not His life, or His resurrection, or His glory? The simple answer of the believer is that He to whom our hearts are now so closely attached has been refused and cast out here, and that just as death meant for the blessed Lord the closing-up of all His links with this world

(for the world, as such, never saw Him again after His death) so, for those who are identified with Him, the associations which once we cherished and cultivated here have no longer any hold upon us. His death has severed the ties which once bound us here.

## **We go back to Scripture, and read of what was set up at the beginning**

This great fact, when accepted, leads to much thought and soul-searching, but the true heart is not afraid of it; for in His death we see not only that which closed up for us everything here, but also that which opens the door to all that lies beyond. That which is really life is reached through death. It may seem difficult to apprehend this at first, but it no longer presents any difficulty when we remember that every blessing for the Christian is connected with Christ where He now is in the resurrection-scene, and not with Him where He was before His death. It is this fact which gives stability and joy to the soul. May every reader be led more and more into the knowledge of it.

Now looking at Christianity externally, one is painfully conscious of the confusion which has come in to disfigure and spoil what should have been a bright witness of the love of God during the Lord's absence from this world. We go back to Scripture, and read of what was set up at the beginning — its simplicity, the prominence it gave to Christ, its refusal of the pretensions of man — and then we look around with amazement at what this thing has become in our own time, with its worldliness, its formality, its exaltation of man, the very little place it gives to Christ, and the monstrous teachings and practices which have found their way into it. We ask wonderingly whether there is any path at all for the believer who seeks to be true only to Christ. Scripture alone can supply the answer: and it is an



immense mercy that Scripture does give an answer so distinct that no one need misunderstand it. In 2 Timothy, the very last of Paul's Epistles, written perhaps shortly before his death, and with a prophetic insight into what was coming to pass, we have the following verses, which are quoted in full:

*"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity [love], peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:19-22).*

The path is clearly enough marked out here for those who are willing to follow it, and where does it lead? The reader will see at once that it brings us in principle to where they were at the beginning. We are to follow with those who *"call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* Two or three brief references will make this plain:

- *"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).*
- *"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14).*
- *"And much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:24).*
- *"With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Corinthians 1:2).*

The quotation from 2 Timothy does in effect sum up in the briefest form what we are taught as to the ground of the gathering together of Christians, namely, owning THE LORD as supreme, and His name as excluding all other names. It is very exclusive, and yet broad enough to take in every single member of Christ's company upon earth. In this common bond we can



come together separated from associations unsuited to that name, and finding sure guidance, for whatever is to go on inside the circle of fellowship, in what was written for the instruction of the saints by the Holy Ghost Himself through the Apostles.

We find at the very beginning, namely, Acts 2, *"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (v.2). This passage is quoted merely to show that there was a new and distinct circle of fellowship set up here, namely, that of the Apostles, and it was into this circle that those who believed and received the Holy Ghost were introduced. It was spoken of as the *"assembly"* or *"church"*, to which souls could be added, as they stepped out of either Judaism or heathenism into the clear shining of gospel light.

Well now, it is a wonderful thing that, in spite of all the confusion, all the *"vessels of wood and of earth," "vessels to dishonour,"* which have become mingled with the *"vessels of gold and of silver,"* this circle of fellowship, as the Lord Himself sees it, remains untouched and unmarred. It is evidently impossible to restore things externally to their original condition—no one would be foolish enough to attempt it—but it is open to us, as we have already seen from 2 Timothy 2, to return to first principles, and in all humility to fulfil those conditions under which we can confidently expect to be conscious of the Lord's presence amongst us when gathered together.

We remember that blessed occasion, on the evening of the Lord's resurrection, when He came into the midst of His own company here, and showed to them the marks which attested His sufferings and death, and when He set all their hearts at rest in the enjoyment of Himself as the Living One, and *"opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."* (Luke 24:45). How could they fail to understand when He, the central figure of all Scripture, was there before them in a life altogether beyond death? Now this was, surely, meant to be a picture of

what the Lord intended to make good to His own, as gathered apart from everything here to Himself, during His absence, and we can, even in this day, come into the light and blessedness of it.

So what features would be found with those who desire to be in accord with such a circle? Every Christian, by the very fact of being a Christian belongs to it, but even in the apostle Paul's day, before the church was fifty years old, it became evident that there were many who were not able and willing to contend against the current of the worldly or judaising Christianity of the time. Those of Asia who *"turned away"* from the Apostle (see 2 Timothy 1:15) were no doubt Christians, but the attractiveness and sweetness of being attached to a heavenly Christ had lost its hold upon them, and they could contentedly go on with their worldly things and associations, while Christ's servant lay neglected and alone in his prison cell.

However, whether there be few or many who identify themselves with a rejected, though glorified Christ, the circle of fellowship remains the same, as we have already seen, and we will endeavour now to get from Scripture the general principles upon which entrance into it (externally) is based.

It is a very important point for those who have to bear the responsibility of commending a person to a company of believers, for reception into the circle of fellowship, what degree of intelligence in the Christian faith or position should be looked for. A great deal of heart-searching has been caused by this; and one can easily see how much grace, as well as spiritual insight, is required in those who have to take such a matter up. For, on the one hand, a person who can readily answer questions may be approved, when in reality there may be but little heart for Christ, and little of the true brokenness which is suited to a person seeking to be identified with Him in His rejection. On the other hand, a person who has been truly converted, and who may have a deep and melting sense of Christ's love, may be kept back, because he may be unable to put things in a form which

would come up to the expectations of those who are making the inquiries on behalf of the assembly. Many mistakes have doubtless been made in both these directions, but it must be as grieving to the Lord for any one who is truly

## **the Spirit brings to my heart the knowledge of God's love**

drawn to Himself to be hindered, or kept unduly waiting, as it is for the more pretentious to be put forward while their hearts are perhaps very little softened, or diverted from the world.

It would seem that the key to this lies in what we have in Romans 5:5. *"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us"*. From the fact of this verse being at the close of the beautiful unfolding of the position of a justified man here (contained in the verses previous) we must not be too ready to come to the conclusion that the Spirit cannot be given, or the love of God shed abroad in the heart, until after the things previously set forth in the chapter are all fully known and enjoyed. Such is not the teaching of Scripture at all.

The gift of the Holy Spirit follows upon the hearty reception of the glad tidings of our salvation. (see Ephesians 1:13, and see also Acts 10:43 and 44.) As one who has been awakened, or *"born again"*, I look out, as it were, from my position of felt need and distance, to see if deliverance is within reach. A messenger from God of some kind—an evangelist, or perhaps a tract or book—comes and makes known the glad tidings of salvation, the precious efficacy of the work of Christ on the cross in having fully vindicated God's righteousness, and in having "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself". I receive, on the evangelist's testimony, the blessed facts connected with the presentation of God's grace in Christ, and God answers that by giving me the Holy Spirit, as a seal, or mark. It is the Spirit who brings to my heart the knowledge of God's love. The vessel may be exceedingly limited in its capacity, it may take in very little, but

still, God's love is there, and from that moment forwards, the Spirit will be as the anointing to teach me all things. 'What, you say, all at once? No, certainly not'. It may, though not necessarily, take years for a soul to learn anything like the blessed order of the truth, and to have its parts in their divine position in the soul. Those, even, who have been longest in the Way are ready enough to own how short a distance they have really travelled in the apprehension of God's things.

Now what bearing has all this upon our subject? Just this—that what we are to look for in those seeking to be identified with a rejected Christ in the breaking of bread is not so much an intimate acquaintance with the form or order of the truth; but what we want to see is the evidence that the Spirit of God is really there—that there has been a simple and hearty appropriation of the work of Christ leading to attachment of heart to Himself *"unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious"* (1 Peter 2:7), and that the subduing power of the love of God is showing itself out, in some measure, at least, in the daily life and ways. These things will be very apparent to a spiritual mind wherever they exist, and we may with perfect confidence count upon God to lead such a one on in the true knowledge of Himself, not in the coldness and shade of an outside place, but inside, in the warmth and light and fellowship of the Christian circle. To such a one, the true inner meaning and blessedness of the breaking of bread will soon become known and enjoyed, and those other deep, and yet simple, things of God which are connected or associated with the Lord's Supper will gradually take shape, and occupy their proper position in the heart and mind.

Dr. Thomas Willey (1847-1940)

*In the next issue (DV) The Lord's Supper – as the link of affection between the Lord and His own.*

*(Scripture references in this series are taken from the Authorised (King James) Version as used in the original publication.)*