

143

Living Water

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

Stone Publishing Trust

33 The Floats,

Riverhead

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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

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(September – October 2017)

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Continuing this series

Recent Ministry

ALWAYS REJOICING

“...as grieved, but always rejoicing; as poor, but enriching many; as having nothing, and possessing all things” 2 Corinthians 6:10.

“For which cause also I suffer these things; but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to him” 2 Timothy 1:12.

Although this occasion is marked by sorrow for all who knew our sister, it is also a time when we can rejoice because we know she is with the Lord. She was one who was loved, not just because of the person that she was, but because she spoke so often to others of her Saviour. She had a link with her Saviour in the glory and knew what it was to have peace with God, and she wanted others to know it too.

In this first verse that I have read, Paul is here commending godly conduct to believers in Corinth, and I thought it would be appropriate for this occasion today when it says, *“as grieved, but always rejoicing”*. Each one of us is grieving because one whom we have known and loved in the Lord we shall never see again, not in flesh anyway. But we can rejoice because she knew the Saviour. She knew she had a heavenly home. She knew of the place that the Lord told His disciples He was going to prepare for them, and had the assurance of her place prepared in heaven too (see John 14:2). What a comfort it is to know that others have but gone before, and that everyone who trusts in Christ is going to that prepared place as well. Our hearts may well rejoice!

But then Paul says, *“as poor, but enriching many”*. Janet knew how to do that and was an example to many of us. But not only were persons enriched with material blessings, but they

were enriched by the knowledge of her Saviour too, for she loved to tell the story of Jesus and His love. And I commend God's love to you. It is no good just hearing about it; it is for your acceptance, trusting in Christ. To have the Lord Jesus as a personal Saviour is the richest blessing you can ever know.

And then, *"as having nothing, and possessing all things"*. And the wonder of it is that every one of us can possess all things, too. Think of what Christ has done. He for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be enriched (2 Corinthians 8:9). We can all possess the eternal blessings that God has in mind for all who trust in Jesus. Janet knew what it was to make these things her own and we can too.

I commend these three short phrases to you. Think them over and, as you do so, also think of the Man in the glory: Janet's Saviour who Himself is a model for those who have trusted in Him that *"we should follow in His steps"* (1 Peter 2:21). Be like Him in emulating what Paul speaks of to the Corinthians here.

I turn now to the Scripture in Timothy. Paul says, *"I am not ashamed of the glad tidings"*. Neither was Janet, and many times she spoke to persons about the Lord. Would that we had the grace and skill to do the same! But let us find encouragement in that God has given to us of His Holy Spirit, so that we might be able to stand in a difficult day and not be ashamed of the glad tidings. It goes on to say here, *"for I know whom I have believed"*. It is not a case of knowing what we have believed – but rather *"whom"* we have believed: that our faith and trust is in Christ personally.

But then Paul tells us that he is persuaded that God is able, *"to keep for that day the deposit I have entrusted to him"*. Our home with Him in glory depends not on us, but it depends on Him and on the mighty work at Calvary when He shed His

precious blood. The soul of every believer is entrusted to Him and He will keep it safe until “that day”. Janet has known what it was for her soul to be kept safe until the day when she was called to be with Him and now she knows what it is to be in His presence.

It depends upon Christ and Him alone. He has done all things well and we can trust Him. May there be blessing and comfort from our time together today so that mourning may be turned to joy, and our confidence and trust may be in the Lord.

Keith Wickens

THE CHRISTIAN’S OUTLOOK

“For we know that if our earthly tabernacle house be destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ... Therefore we are always confident, and know that while present in the body we are absent from the Lord, (for we walk by faith, not by sight;) we are confident, I say, and pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord. Wherefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to him.” 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-9

We would all realise that the last few years of Janet’s life have been ones of a good deal of trial. She has faced those years with courage and we think also of her dear husband Geoffrey and the family who have gone through those years with her. The Bible is very realistic about these things. It says that we get weaker as we go along, and we do.

The question then is, what are the prospects? What is the Christian looking for? All of us today, what are we looking for? Just to get weaker in the end of things? That is not what the Christian says, it is not what the Bible says. In fact, what the apostle Paul says here – he does not say we hope, or we think, he says “*we know*” – we are absolutely certain what

the end of things will be. Actually, the great desire of the Christian is for the Lord Jesus to come. That is what we look for. But Janet is one of those, one of the many, who have actually gone on ahead. Many have already done so and she is among them.

And so the question arises, what then? Well, the apostle tells us what will happen then. He says what we have down here – he uses the word tabernacle or tent – is not permanent, it is not fixed. And we all know that it is not fixed. We shall not be here for ever under any circumstances. But God has something else prepared for those that love Him. We have a building from God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I cannot tell you about eternity. The Bible does not tell us much. None of us would be able to take it in if it did. But it is eternal, it is in the heavens, it is there with God Himself.

Now, all of these verses have something to tell us but I could not read them all in the time. They tell us about groaning while we are here. Well, that is a real thing, too. Our sister Janet overcame a good deal that might have made her groan. That is an example to us; in the face of groaning do I overcome? Again, the Bible is realistic. The trials of life down here are very real but the apostle says, *“we are always confident”*. Well, that is a lovely thing that the Christian can be confident. Not just sometimes this and sometimes that – absolutely sure. Oh, we are all tested about that, whether we really are always as confident as we should be. But the apostle says we are always confident.

And in these verses he adds two things more. We, *“know that while present in the body”*, like we are, you and I, here today, *“we are absent from the Lord”*. We are not where we finally desire to be; we are absent from the Lord. He says *“we walk by faith, not by sight”*. Every Christian here today, friends, is

someone who is walking by faith, trusting in the Lord Jesus, trusting for the forgiveness of their sins, trusting that He will keep them all the way on the journey here.

If you have not felt quite sure about that, just think about the testimony of our sister, what it was to be sure; that she could trust the Lord and be protected and preserved by Him through death. We walk by faith, we trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he says, *“we are confident”* – he says it again – *“pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord”*. Now, friends here today, we have to be realistic. It is a great loss when any one of the Lord’s people are taken from this world. It is a loss on this occasion to our dear brother Geoffrey. It is a loss to all his family, to all of Janet’s family and to all who have loved her and who have learned so much from her – you all have your own little story to tell. But a Christian does not come to an occasion like this in despair because this is evidently a great blessing, *“pleased rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord”*. Left this scene and gone – not just to a better one – to a perfect one. A place where every Christian will really want to be. That is our hope.

The invitation at a time like this is that we all might share that hope and prospect. And it is open: my dear friend Keith who has been speaking and others, the hymns we have sung, tell you what the way is – trust the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and the salvation of your soul.

But then there is just one other thing. Paul said, *“Wherefore also we are zealous...”*. What does zealous mean? It means it is what I always want to try to do and seek the Lord’s help to do. To be zealous and keen, not just struggling along and hoping that things will turn out. Zealous, for what? *“whether present or absent, to be agreeable to him”*. I just leave that with you as a final thought. There are plenty of times when

there is nobody else watching but the Lord knows. He knows whether you are zealous to be agreeable to Him.

What is agreeable to the Lord Jesus?

What is agreeable to the Lord Jesus? Well, to love Him, to bear witness to Him, to seek increasingly to be like Him. I say with complete confidence, that was the great desire of our sister Janet, now with Him where she wanted to be. And that is why – yes, it is a time of sorrow and a very real one – but the Christian does not come to a time like this in misery. We come together in hope. Our desire would be that every one here should have that hope and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ for His name's sake.

David Burr

Both the above words were given at the burial of Janet Bartlett.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 6 (Highlights of a Bible reading)

Introduction

Chapter 6 continues the line of teaching begun in Chapter 5. The chapter can be summarised as:

- Verses 1-18 The spirit in which the disciples should perform good works.
- Verses 19-34 Separation from the spirit of the world and its anxieties

As in chapter 5 the Lord continues to speak of the Father so that the disciples might grow in their understanding of this relationship.*

* See J.N.Darby; Synopsis to the books of the Bible Vol. 3 pp. 41-42

The spirit in which the disciples should perform good works.

The first 18 verses of chapter 6 demonstrate the relationship with the Father that the disciples were to enjoy. The full scope of this awaited the resurrection when the Lord would say *“I ascend to my Father and your Father”* (John 20:17), but it begins here. His own were to act not as pleasing men, or seeking prominence or importance for themselves, but in regard to the Father *“who sees in secret”* (vv. 4, 6 & 18). The Father will care for them and look after them. It is a beautiful introduction by the Lord as to what God known as Father was to mean to them.

The idea of what is secret is quite a challenge. Are the things we do done for God’s glory or our own? We find in our experience that it is possible to start rightly, but we may easily slip into something else – something that gives us the glory. Perhaps that was what had happened to the Pharisees. They had reached a point where if they gave to the needy they would blow a trumpet to draw attention to themselves and their generosity. It was far from what was pleasing to God.

The Lord introduces the Father in a very homely way in relation to ordinary and everyday things – someone praying or fasting, or giving money to the poor. The Lord focuses on the living relationship there is to be between the disciple and the Father. It challenges us: ‘What am I like?’ ‘Am I undertaking something because it makes me look good, or because it would please the Father?’ We see the perfect pattern in Christ. He did nothing for show. He says, ‘I do always the things which please the Father’ (see John 8:29).

We read: *“let thy name be sanctified, let thy kingdom come”* (v.9). These are very practical matters. We may think of the first as being occupied with praise to the Father but it is much more than that. The Father is to be sanctified in our walk here

in this world. He was sanctified in the life of Jesus here and we are called to follow in the same pattern. As we are concerned to be pleasing to the Father in our ways it is manifested that God's kingdom is being formed in our hearts.

they would be free to speak to the Father without fear

The Lord tells the disciples that the *"Father knows what things ye have need before ye beg anything of him"* (v.8). So they would be free to speak to the Father without fear, conscious that He knew about the matter already. So they could speak about daily needs, about their sins and their weaknesses. Then as coming into this blessed relationship with the Father, they are helped in their relations with one another – to be forgiving, for instance, as their heavenly Father was to them.

Separation from the spirit of the world and its anxieties

The Lord speaks here of practical deliverance from the motivation and the spirit of the world. *"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"* (v.20) is quite a challenging exhortation. It is very different from having your mind set on making money, or achieving some great worldly advantage. The Lord makes the distinction very clear when He says *"ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (money) (v.24).

The believer is to be marked by a line of heavenly interest and concern for the things of the Lord. This finds expression in practical ways, for instance, spending time reading the Bible rather than a secular book. That is one example but there are many others. It is based on sacrificing something. It may be our time or money gets used in supporting something for the Lord rather than something for myself. In order to encourage His own the Lord reminds them that treasure in heaven cannot be taken away or lost. Nothing can spoil what is laid up there.

One of the things that happen when we believe, and as we grow in our knowledge of the Lord, is that there is a change in the things that please us. We probably all know times when Christian things bored us or seemed irrelevant, but as we come to know the Lord, what interests and pleases Him become the things that interest and please us.

The apostle Paul is an example of a man laying up treasures in heaven. His life was marked by particular devotion to the things of the Lord. He had an eye that was "*single*"(v.22), that is a purpose fixed on one thing, which in his case was the glory of the Lord. Writing to Christians in Corinth, he told them that he had conducted himself, both in the world and in respect of the Christians in Corinth, in holiness and sincerity which was from God and not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace (see 2 Corinthians 1:12). There is hardly a greater example in the scriptures, apart from the Lord Himself, of a man marked by heavenly interest and concern for the things of God.

Paul was seeking "*first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*" (v.33). That was his objective. The object we have in our lives and the set of our minds are important. We may not always get things right but if our objective is right we can count on the help of the Lord. Paul must have found it quite testing when he was forbidden to speak the word in Asia and then when he sought to go to Bithynia he was not allowed to (see Acts 16:6 &7). Through such experiences we learn dependence and patience – features that were seen in such perfection in the Man Christ Jesus.

The great theme towards the end of the chapter is that the disciple is to have confidence in God. The Lord speaks of a range of practical things and the detail of daily life and tells His own that they need not be in anxiety about these things. He reminds them that the heavenly Father knows all about

their needs and is set on caring for them. He tells the disciples to *“Observe with attention the lilies of the field”* (v.28) and *“to take account of the birds of the heaven”* (v.26) and the way that the heavenly Father clothes the lilies and looks after the birds. All this is to give the disciples assurance. The Lord is later going to tell them that *“even the hairs of the head are all numbered”* (Matthew 10:30) as a further illustration of the detail of the Father’s care.

The Lord continues, *“Be not therefore careful, saying, What shall we eat?... or What shall we put on?... For your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things”* (v.31 & 32). The force of the Lord’s words is not that we should be irresponsible but to save the disciples from anxiety. Martha and Mary in Luke 10 provide an illustration for us. Martha was troubled about many things while Mary was complacently sitting at the Lord’s feet listening to His word. Jesus commends Mary for having chosen the good part, while Martha was fretful and distracted. Peter writes, *“Cast all your cares upon him, for he cares about you”* (1 Peter 5:7).

At the end of the chapter the Lord sets out the priorities for the disciple: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you”* (v.33). The underlying thought to the kingdom of God is the rule of God in the soul. That is to apply to the believer now. The Lord provided the perfect example. We read prophetically of Him as Man here that He was *“wakened morning by morning to hear as the instructed”* (Isaiah 50:4). The Lord came to do the will of God and was never deflected from it.

Highlights of a Bible reading at Bromley, July 2016.

God willing, the highlights of a reading on Matthew chapter 7 will be published in the next issue

Poetry Selection

HOME

Sweetly put to sleep by Jesus,
on His breast;
Safe for ever in His keeping,
oh! How blest!
Is there weeping for the sleeping
one, at rest?
Sheltered by the blood of Jesus,
shed to save,
God hath taken home the spirit
which He gave.
Earthly sadness, heavenly gladness
o'er the grave!
Hark! I think I hear the trumpet
sounding loud!
Ransomed bodies in a moment
quit the shroud,
Swiftly rising, Jesus meeting
in the cloud!

Henry S. T. Bullock (1858 – 1938)

LOVE'S REMEMBRANCE

Love's remembrance, Lord, Thou'rt seeking
From Thine own, assembled thus;
For the bread we break is speaking
Of Thy body given for us.
Holy vessel of God's pleasure
Was that body held by Thee;
Nothing but His will, Thy measure
From the manger to the tree.
Lord we drink the cup of blessing,
The communion of Thy blood;
Thus, as one, our bond confessing
In the covenant of God.
'Tis a testament deep founded,
Sealed for ever in Thy blood;
And its source is love unbounded
In the very heart of God.

Henry S. T. Bullock (1858 – 1938)

*Hymn as originally composed and as C. A.
Coates would have known it*

Testimony Section

THE CONVERSION OF MARTIN LUTHER

When first awakened to a sense of sin, Luther became unspeakably troubled. Once and again deep anguish took hold of his soul and it seemed as if he would sink under it. On one occasion he had been conversing with a friend upon the things of God. No sooner had the conversation ended, than the truths of which they had been speaking struck home with awful power to the tossed soul of Luther. He left the room and sought the nearest cell to give vent to the feelings of his bursting heart. He threw himself upon the bed and prayed aloud in agony, repeating over and over again these words of the apostle, *"God hath shut up together all in unbelief, in order that He might shew mercy to all"* (Romans 11:32).

Luther now began to try to make himself holy. He fasted for days together. He shut himself up alone in his cold cell. He passed many nights without sleep. He read, he studied, he prayed, he wept, he watched, he strove, but all in vain! He found himself as far from holiness and peace as ever! If ever anyone could have gained heaven by his own merits, Luther would have gained it.

To those around him, he seemed the holiest man alive. But the light of the law showed him that within all was vile. His soul cried out for rest, but he found it not, for he was seeking it not in God's way, but in a way of his own. He wanted to be sure that his sins were forgiven him, for he felt that until he knew this, he could not have peace. But his fear increased upon him, and he knew not what to do, nor which way to turn. He saw everything that he thought and did to be sin, and how could he rest until he knew that all was forgiven! His friends told him to do good works and that would satisfy the justice of God. Miserable comforters!

'What good works', said he, 'can proceed out of a heart like mine; how can I, with works like these, stand before a holy Judge'. The terrors of the fiery law compassed him about and consumed his soul. He saw nothing in God but the angry Judge. He had not yet learned the riches of His grace through Jesus Christ.

His health gave way. "*A wounded spirit, who can bear*" (*Proverbs 18:14*). He wasted away. He became thin and pale. His eyes, which were peculiarly bright, looked wild with despair and death seemed just at hand. In this state he was visited by an old priest. His name was Staupitz. He pitied the dying monk, and all the more so when he was told the cause of his suffering, for he had himself passed through the same conflict. But he had found the peace of Christ in his soul, and was therefore well fitted to give counsel to Luther.

'It is in vain', said Luther to him, 'that I make promises to God; sin is always too strong for me'.

'Oh, my friend', said Staupitz, 'I have often made vows myself, but I never could keep them; I now make no more vows; for if God will not be merciful to me for Christ's sake, I cannot stand before Him with all my vows and works'.

Luther made known to him all his fears. He spoke of God's justice, God's holiness, God's sovereign majesty. How could he stand before such a God?

'Why', said his friend, 'do you distress yourself with these thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus, to the blood which He has shed for you; it is there that you will see the mercy of God. Cast yourself into the arms of the Saviour. Trust in Him—in the righteousness of His life—in the atoning sacrifice of His death. Do not shrink away from Him. God is not against you; it is only you who are averse from God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favour'.

Still Luther was dark. He thought he had not repented properly, and asked, 'How can I dare believe in the favour of God, so long as there is in me no real conversion? I must be changed before He can receive me'. He is told that there can be no real conversion so long as a man fears God as a stern judge. 'There is', said his friend, 'no true repentance but that which begins in the love of God and righteousness. That which some fancy to be the end of repentance is only its beginning. If you wish to be really converted, do not try these penances. Love Him who has first loved you'.

Luther listens and is glad. The day breaks, new light pours in. 'Yes', said he, 'it is Jesus Christ that comforts me so wonderfully by these sweet and healing words'. In order to true repentance we must love God! He had never heard this before. Taking this truth as his guide, he went to the Scriptures. He turned up all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion; and these two words which were formerly his terror, now become precious and sweet. The passages which used to alarm him, now 'seemed to run to me from all sides, to smile, to spring up and play around me. Formerly I tried to love God, but it was all force; and there was no word so bitter to me as that of repentance. Now there is none more pleasant. Oh, how blessed are all God's precepts when we read them not in books only, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour'.

Thus he learned that we are not forgiven because we love God, but we love God because we are forgiven. We cannot repent, we cannot love, until we have known and believed the love that God hath for us. *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).*

Still Luther's darkness at times returned. His sins again went

over his soul, and hid the face of God. 'Oh, my sin! My sin! My sin!' cried he, one day to Staupitz.

'What would you have?' said Staupitz. 'Would you like if your sin was not real? Remember, if you have only the appearance of a sinner, you must be content with the mere appearance of a Saviour. But learn this, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who are real and great sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation.' 'Look at the wounds of Christ,' said he, on another occasion, 'and you will see there shining clearly the purpose of God towards men. We cannot understand God out of Christ.' * *

But Luther's peace sometimes gave way, and his fears returned. He was taken ill and brought down to the gates of death. Terror again took hold on him. Death seemed full of gloom. It was a fearful thing to meet a holy God! An old monk visited him in his sickbed, and in him God gave him another comforter and guide. Sitting at his bedside he repeated this sentence of the Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' These words, thus simply and sweetly brought to mind, were like balm to the soul of Luther. 'We are not merely to believe that there is forgiveness for David or Peter; the command of God is that we believe there is forgiveness for our own sins,' said the old monk. Luther's spirit was revived. He found on this rock a sufficient resting place, and his soul rejoiced in the forgiving love of God.

Thus his weary soul found rest. He was now like a vessel that has reached its haven. No storm can reach or harm it. He was like the dove in the clefts of the rock. He was like the man who had reached the city of refuge. He found himself safe

* * Years later in 1523 when a real breach had come in between the two men, Luther wrote to Staupitz "...it would not be right for me to forget you or be ungrateful to you, for it was through you that the light of the gospel first began to shine out of the darkness into my heart."

and at rest. Jehovah his righteousness was his song, and his joy. It was what he saw in Christ that gave him hope and confidence toward God, and not what he saw in himself. It was what he knew of Christ and His righteousness that took away all fear and filled his soul with peace. He believed and was forgiven. Nor did he reckon it presumption to count himself a forgiven soul. He gloried and rejoiced in this. He counted it one of the most grievous of all sins to doubt it. He saw that the gospel was intended to bring us forgiveness, and to assure us of it. He saw that whenever we really believe in the gospel, then that forgiveness is as completely and certainly ours as if we were already in heaven. This was the very life of Luther's soul. It was this that made him so bold in the cause of Christ, in all his future life. He was assured of the favour of God, and that took away all fear of men.

There was one text of Scripture which seems to have been greatly blessed to him. It was very frequently on his mind during his many struggles; it was the text which Paul quotes from Habakkuk, to prove that we are justified by faith alone: *"The just shall live by faith"* (Romans 1:17). Once, he was sent to Rome on some business, and he thought that good works done at Rome were better and had more merit than those done anywhere else. He was told that if he would crawl up a very long stair, called Pilate's staircase, on his bare knees, he would acquire a great stock of merit. With great earnestness he set himself to do this miserable penance. While he was crawling up the steps, he thought he heard a voice like thunder, saying aloud to him, *"The just shall live by faith"*.

Immediately he started from his knees, and stopped in the middle of the ascent. The words went to his soul like the voice of God reproving him for his folly. Filled with shame, he

instantly left the place. He saw that it was not by his works that he was to save himself at all, far less by works such as these— *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).*

At another time, he was appointed to lecture on divinity. After explaining the Psalms, he came to the Epistle to the Romans. In studying this he took great delight. He used to sit in his quiet cell for many hours with the Bible open before him, meditating on that Epistle. The seventeenth verse of the first chapter fixed his eye, and filled his whole thoughts: *“The just shall live by faith”*. In this he saw that there was another life than that possessed by man in general, and that this life was the fruit of faith. In the midst of much darkness these simple words were *“a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path”*. Clearer light soon dawned upon his soul, and through him the bright beams of the gospel shot forth upon the benighted nations of Europe. The conversion of Luther was the dawning of the Reformation.

Horatius Bonar (1808 – 1899)

A Voice from the Past

“I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE”

John 11:25 - 26

John 12:3

It is on my heart that the Lord may engage our thoughts and affections with Himself. The sisters at Bethany were mourning the loss of their brother, but when the Lord said to Martha, *“I am the resurrection and the life”*, it was as much as to say, I would have you think of Me.

How wonderful that God had brought into this world a Person who could say, *“I am the resurrection and the life”!* In that Person there was a power and a glory absolutely superior to

the power of death; nothing brought out the glory of the Son of God as death did. If He came into contact with death – and thank God He did – it was only to make manifest His complete victory over death. The power of divine love and holiness in Him could but be victorious over death.

The Lord says, *“he that believes on me, though he hath died, shall live”*. It is a great and blessed thing to believe on Him – the One in whom resurrection was inherent even as Man in this world. In Him, the Son of God, was the power of resurrection, and those who believe on Him become participators in the power of resurrection that is in Him. They live in the life of the One in whom they believe.

It is but a brief moment until all who believe in the Son of God will be found in actuality in His life in resurrection, an order of life in which we are to live with Him eternally. God would have us, even now, to apprehend in His Son the order of that resurrection life.

Our beloved brother is to live eternally in that life. What a comforting thought to us in the breaking of the natural tie! There is no break in the spiritual ties. They remain, as bound up with the Son of God. It is in Him that every blessing is. It is in Him that resurrection life is to be seen. How wonderful that we have such a Person in whom to believe!

Turning now to Mary, we see in her one who puts her costly ointment upon Him. The Lord’s interpretation of her act was that it was for the day of His burial that she had kept this. In the wisdom of divine love the Lord did not die until He had secured in the love of one heart such an appreciation of the power resident in His Person that she understood that if He went into death, He must be victorious over death. She came beforehand to anoint Him with that in view.

It is a principle of spiritual life that love and appreciation of

the Lord Jesus Christ must find expression. Where such exist there is an intense desire to give expression to what the heart cherishes. Nothing greater can be said of any person than that he or she appreciated Christ, and this we can truly say of our beloved brother. Most of us here had heard him ourselves giving expression to his appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he has also left his appreciation on record: in the hymns he has left behind him we have the fragrance of his inward appreciation of the Son of God.†

How wonderful that there should be produced in human hearts, once so empty Godward, the holy fragrance of His blessed Son, formed and expressed in living affections. What a joy for the blessed God! It is this that is the substance and kernel of what engages us at this time. The best thing that can be said of anyone can be said of our beloved brother, and that is that he had a deep appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those of us who knew him best, know that there was in his heart an appreciation of the Son of God that will eternally enrich the heaven of God's glory.

Ours is a deep and real sorrow – we miss from amongst us our beloved brother – but we can and do rejoice in what had been wrought in him and which will contribute to the joy of God's eternity.

Let us glory increasingly in the faith of the Son of God.

C. A. Coates

Word at the burial of Henry S. T. Bullock, Teignmouth 1938

†See the Poetry Section for two of Henry Bullock's hymns

A Word for Today

THE LORD'S SUPPER - 2

As the link of affection

between the Lord and His own

Luke 22:14-20

Each of the four gospels takes up, from its own point of view, the occasion on which the Lord's Supper was instituted, though only the first three of them refer distinctly to the Supper itself.

Taking a survey of all the narratives, there is one fact which stands out very clearly, and that is, that the institution of the Lord's Supper was sacred to the Lord Himself and those who were His by the drawings and ties of divine love. No profane hand was allowed to touch the cup, or to break the bread. It is an immense relief to see that Judas, the traitor, the only one of that little company in whose heart there was no response of love, had gone out during the eating of the Passover meal, before the Lord's Supper, as such, was instituted. *"He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night"* (John 13:30). The Lord Himself had bidden the traitor to go out quickly, see verse 27.

What is the point of all this? It seems clear enough that, while the Passover was a national commemoration, and could be partaken of by any Jew who was ceremonially clean, the Lord's Supper was to be the privilege of those only who were in the circle of His love. We shall see, as we proceed, that in the very nature of things it could not be otherwise, and that the partaking of the Lord's Supper by the unconverted is a grievous perversion of what was in the Lord's mind when He first instituted it.

Now the account in Luke, which we have quoted at the head of this chapter, will be found on comparison to be the one most closely in line with what we find in Paul's references to the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians, after Christianity had been fully

established. It seems well, therefore, that we should give this account a rather fuller consideration, without overlooking what we find in the other gospels. **It was not to be a mere memorial**

The Gospel of Luke itself, as we know, more particularly sets forth the fulness and largeness of grace, and the Lord is presented to us as the chosen and suited vessel of it. It is here where we should expect to find the fullest and most affecting account of what was to be the link of love between the Lord and His own during the period of His rejection. This is exactly what we do find. Here and here only is the personal element introduced:

"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

"This cup is the new testament [or covenant] in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19, 20)

It expresses the bond of affection, which the approaching death of Christ would only confirm and establish, between the Shepherd and the sheep. Whatever other features may present themselves to us later on, evidently the simplest and most elementary thought in partaking of the Supper is the response of affection towards Him who by death wholly and absolutely set Himself apart from everything in order to bring into effect the purposes of God's love.

It has been said, and the thought is very beautiful, that here in Luke we have the Lord Himself showing His disciples in what way He could still be with them after His departure; that is, that in the Supper they would call Him to mind. It was not to be a mere memorial, as of some historical event, but that, in the act of partaking of the bread and wine, they would 'call to mind' - that is the real force of the Scripture term translated "*remember*" - Himself, in a personal way. The deep reality of His death would

necessarily occupy the heart at such a moment, but there would, at the same time, be the full recognition of Himself as the living One, *"alive for evermore"* (Revelation 1:18), the *"first-born among many brethren"* (Romans 8:29). What a wonderful moment it is for the believer when he reaches this point, that, as belonging to Christ's company, we can sit before Him as thus 'called to mind', and enjoy the unhindered contemplation of His love.

Before passing on, it would be interesting to consider afresh the striking way in which the Passover and the Lord's Supper touched one another on this affecting occasion. The Passover feast was that which recalled the much to be remembered night when in Egypt the blood of the slain lamb was sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of the house, and when the sheltered family within the house sat in peace and safety to feast on the lamb, while death and judgment were falling on the guilty nation around them. It was to the Israelites the divine pledge of redemption, not only bringing them out from the bondage of Egypt, but bringing them in to the goodly land of God's purpose. For well-nigh 1,500 years (though with many interruptions) this memorial was kept up in the yearly feast of the Passover, or unleavened bread, and we who are in the light of Christianity know that it was the continuous setting-forth before God of the true Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose death was to be the basis and pledge of a redemption and deliverance deeper and wider far than ever Israelite knew or dreamed of.

Now it is exceedingly beautiful to see this type (or illustration) receiving its fulfilment in the Person of Him who, on the Passover day itself (that is, the very day on which He was sitting with His disciples around Him, for the Jewish day began, as we know, in the evening), was to be set forth as God's Lamb, *"our Passover, sacrificed for us"* (1 Corinthians 5:7). This is the explanation of the urgency of Christ's love: *"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer"* (Luke 22:15).

He would not omit to associate Himself, as a true Israelite, with the little godly company, or remnant, of that moment, in the eating of the Passover, and in order to accomplish this, knowing full well what was before Him, He would take care that the meal should be earlier than was usual amongst the Jews. It is evident to any careful reader, that the eating of the Passover, among the Jews generally, did not take place in Jerusalem until the following afternoon, that is, Friday afternoon, as we should call it, while the meal, partaken of by the Lord and His disciples, was on the Thursday evening. The result was that at the very time when the Passover was being generally eaten, the true Passover Lamb was being offered on the cross. The leaders of the people had endeavoured to prevent the betrayal and death of the Lord Jesus occurring on the feast day, lest there should be *"an uproar among the people"* (Matthew 26:5), but they were helpless in the matter. A power beyond themselves was ordering events in such a way that the ancient type should be fulfilled with the most literal exactness.

The Passover, then, having been eaten, the Lord formally sets it aside for the time with the declaration that He would no more eat thereof until the Kingdom of God should come—an evident reference to the establishment of the Kingdom in display and power. It is the Lord's own pledge that, although everything seemed to be closed up by His rejection and death, nothing could or would really prevent the carrying out of the purpose of God; or, in other words, that the fulfilment of God's promises to Abraham and David was a certainty as to which there could not be the possibility of failure. Abraham had rejoiced that he should see Christ's day (see John 8:56), and David exulted in Him as Son of God, Son of man, and Lord (see Psalms 2, 8 and 110), and their bright anticipations will be fully realised.

In the meantime, a new order was to come in, and provision was to be made for those who were to be identified with the Lord during the period of His rejection. It was for these that the

Lord's Supper was instituted. The little group around the Lord on the night of His betrayal represented, and were to form the nucleus of, the company of those who were by the eating of the bread and drinking of the cup to show forth His death, that is, His rejection here, until His coming again. The meaning of the bread and of the cup will come before us more fully later, but meanwhile may the sense of the love which found so touching an expression on that memorable night be greatly deepened within us! How it melts and captivates our hearts as we think of the Lord, in the full knowledge surely of all that there was to come out in those disciples—the denial of Peter, and the forsaking and flight of all of them in the presence of danger—expressing the yearnings of His faithful and forbearing love towards them, the love which would have them thus close around Himself in the hour of His deep pressure.

We must not forget that it was on that very evening, either inside the upper room, or on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, when all the gracious communications of John 13 to 17 fell from the lips of the blessed Lord. It would seem that as the pressure from without grew heavier and more severe, so His heart found its relief in bringing out of His hidden treasury the rich unfolding of divine love which, though intended primarily to reassure and cheer the little company then gathered around Him, have been so precious to the believers who since that moment have been brought into the circle.

Dr. Thomas Willey (1847 – 1940)

In the next issue (DV) The Lord's Supper – as the expression of fellowship.

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