

156

LIVING WATER

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

Stone Publishing Trust.

54a Wannock Lane, Eastbourne, BN20 9SF

As stated in the preface to the previous edition no. 155, this is the final edition of "Living Water". It consists entirely of material which Mark Lemon, as editor of the magazine, had earlier prepared for publication. The trustees of the Stone Publishing Trust hope that it may provide a fitting conclusion to this aspect of Mark's long commitment to the work of the Lord.

Over 25 years ago the then trustees felt before the Lord a need for a fresh supply of written ministry for His people, near and far. It remains a matter of thanksgiving that Mark came forward to assemble and edit six editions each year of what became "Living Water". From small beginnings in this country "Living Water" began to percolate abroad and has been widely appreciated: selections have been regularly translated into other languages, not least in Burma (Myanmar). The day will declare what part the magazine, and the prayerful and skilful labours of its editor, may have played in the Lord's work and the promotion of His glory.

The permission of the publishers 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.

Cover Picture:

Helmken Falls, Wells Gray Provincial Park, BC, Canada - Tom Hawkins

Printed by Lakeside Printing,

Unit 4A, Munday Industrial Estate, Morley Rd, Tonbridge, TN9 1RA, UK

Living Water 156

(November – December 2019)

Recent Ministry

- WHO THEN IS THIS? Alexander Mowat 1
A preaching of the gospel at Warley, 3 June 2018
- PRAYER HEARD IN HEAVEN Keith Wickens 7
An address at Hampton, 23 June 2018

Poetry Selection

- A CELEBRATION OF A CHANGE OF HEART William Hone 17

Testimony Section

- MARTYRS OF THE MARIAN PERSECUTION -
THOMAS HAWKES BURNT AT COGGESHALL, ESSEX 18
10th JUNE 1555

Issues 100 to 103 of this magazine carried accounts of some of those burnt at the stake in 1555. The story of Thomas Hawkes was intended to form part of that series but it had to be held over. It is printed now because it is an inspiring story that deserves to be told.

Current voices from the past

- TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT PRAYER Hugh Miller 20
- WHO WILL TAKE AWAY THE STONE? Gerhard Tersteegen 23

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

Our Privacy Notice prepared under the General Data Protection Regulations may be viewed at:
<http://www.stonepublishingtrust.org.uk/privacy.html> Or please write to the Trust and a copy will be sent to you.

Recent Ministry

**“WHO THEN IS THIS, THAT HE COMMANDS EVEN
THE WINDS AND THE WATER, AND THEY OBEY
HIM?”**

Psalm 107:23-32

Hebrews 6:18-20

Luke 8:22-25

You could say that there is a nautical tone about these passages that I have read: stormy winds, raging seas, sailors in trouble and at their wits' end, calling for help out of their trouble. But then, there is a safe anchorage, an anchorage above and beyond the storm. That anchorage is in a Person. That anchorage is in the One we have just read of in Luke 8. They questioned, *“Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?”*

Now, I realise that in Warley you are a little bit from the sea and none of us is a voyager on the high seas but we are all voyagers on the sea of life and these elements that are encountered by the sailors on the sea in principle are encountered in the sea of life by each one of us.

How marvellous Psalm 107 is. What a vivid picture it presents of what God can do in raising up the stormy wind and the seas in order to cause people to call upon Him and find that He, and He alone, can save them out of their trouble. We often marvel at creation, we look at the heavens and we see the glory of God, all the constellations and the planets. We look around the earth and we see the marvels of creation from the smallest detail to the largest mountain. But then, think of this, *“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, These see the works of Jehovah, and his wonders in the deep”*. In Findochty, in north east Scotland, overlooking the harbour is a statue of a fisherman and these verses are quoted on the plinth. Mariners at sea have some appreciation of the wonders of the

deeps. There are the heavens, there is the earth around, but the creatorial greatness of God is witnessed in the deeps of the sea as well. We should freshly marvel at the magnitude and majesty of our Creator.

Forecasters will forecast that the storm is coming. They will tell you what the power of the wind is going to be, and so on. But, wait a minute, we read, *"he speaketh, and raiseth the stormy wind"*. Who is this? This is the God with whom we have to do, the God of creation. *"he speaketh, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof"*. And further down? *"He maketh the storm a calm, and the waves thereof are still"*. The same God who raises the storm can bring about the calm. This is a picture of persons in the midst of a violent storm at sea and calling to God in their trouble and finding that He answers them.

I have never been at sea in a situation like this but many a sailor has been. But, no matter how great the trouble that is faced by mariners at sea, the greatest trouble that a person can have is trouble of soul. To be a sinner before God, guilty, lost, having come short of the glory of God and to be powerless in one's self to do anything about it, that is trouble indeed. Then to find themselves in the area of God's word and to be convicted of sin, convicted of their situation before God. That can be the turning point when the soul in desperation calls upon the only Person who can save them from that trouble and that Person is the Saviour God.

I have spoken about the wonders in the deep. That is creatorial. But the Saviour I speak of tonight, He has explored greater depths than the wonders of the deep expressed in Psalm 107. He has explored the depths of Calvary's woe. He has explored the depths of death. And He has fathomed these depths. Why did He do it? It was so that the sinner might be saved. That the soul who calls on Him in their trouble might be rescued out of impending danger, rescued from a lost eternity. And the only One who could effect that rescue is none other than the

God-provided Saviour. What a Saviour to know!

We read in Psalm 107 about waves, that mount up to the heavens and go down to the depths. *"Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and they are at their wits' end"*. Think of the soul coming to its wits' end. At 'wits' end corner' Jesus will meet you. He has met many a soul at wits' end corner, when every attempt to appease, every attempt to find a solution to the soul's distress has been tried and has failed; at wits' end corner Jesus will meet the sinner there.

He will meet the sinner in the storm. He will draw near just as you are and just where you are. What is He waiting for? He is waiting for you to cry out to Him. *"Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses"*. Is there anybody here tonight at wits' end corner where life is getting you down? Not only your load of sin, but life in general getting you down. You cannot find a way out of your problem. You cannot find a solution to your need. Here is the answer. *"Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble"*. Cry unto Him tonight. It says: *"He maketh the storm a calm, and the waves thereof are still"*. We look out on the sea, we see the calmness of it – on another day the waves are mountainous. And that is just looking at it from a distance. But think of the One who raises up the storm and that same One making the sea a calm. That One is seeking your blessing tonight in the gospel, in divine grace He is appealing to humanity tonight in order to reach out and bless the vilest sinner.

Jesus can do that because of what He did at Calvary's cross. Nobody else could do that work — He did it alone. Luke tells us that in the garden of Gethsemane an angel appeared strengthening Him (Luke 22:43) but there was no such support at Calvary. My Saviour went into the depths of Calvary's woe alone. He endured all the hostility and enmity of man alone. But, more than that, there He offered Himself without spot to God,

the sinless offering, and the fire of God's judgment fell on that offering. The offerings described in the Old Testament were consumed but my Saviour bore it all and triumphed. Man did not take His life from Him. Having finished the work, He delivered up His Spirit to His Father. How triumphant! And He went into the domain of death.

How was He going to fare there? Was death going to hold Him? Would another monument be raised over yet another dead person? No! My Saviour has broken death's power. He has broken the bands of death. He went to the lowest point. The prophet Jonah puts it, *"the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the bars of the earth closed upon me for ever"* (Jonah 2:5, 6). Up from the grave He arose, triumphant over all His foes. A risen, a glorious Saviour is the central point of the glad tidings tonight, a Saviour seated at God's right hand. I love to think of Him on the cross and all that He bore for us but it is even more wonderful to think of Him where He is, out of death, exalted and crowned with glory and honour in the presence of the Father.

"They rejoice because they are quiet; and he bringeth them unto their desired haven". What a relief for the sailor in distress when the ship is guided into a desired haven. How much greater the relief for the troubled soul when the trouble is met and he is guided into the peace and rest of the presence of the Saviour who loves him far more than anyone else could love. And His love has been expressed in a deeper way than all other loves, a love expressed by going to the depths of Calvary.

"Let them give thanks unto Jehovah for his loving-kindness, and for his wondrous works to the children of men". Have you thanked God for answering your call? Have you shown your appreciation of what the Saviour did for you at Calvary's cross? Oh, the safety of that haven which is beyond the troubled scene in which we live. Find that safety today as trusting in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Friend.

I read about the anchor, a safe anchorage. It is not an anchor at sea; it is an anchor in heaven. The analogy is drawn from the Old Testament where 'cities of refuge' were provided, cities to which a person who had slain someone accidentally could flee; if they entered the city before the 'avenger of blood' caught up with them and their case was heard and accepted they were safe as long as they remained in the city until the death of the high priest (see Numbers 35:6-32). There were three cities of refuge on the wilderness side of the Jordan and three over the Jordan and they were located so that it was possible to flee there; there was a distance to go but it was not impossible to get to one of the cities from any part of Israel. Well, it is not a city that is offered as a refuge in the gospel. It is to a glorious Person that we are to flee. Now who is that Person? It is the Lord Jesus Christ and in fleeing for refuge to Him you *"lay hold on the hope set before us, which we have as anchor of the soul"*. We live in a changing world; there is nothing reliable in it. But this anchor will not drift. The anchor of the soul is safe. We read that it is *"both secure and firm"*. Your salvation, as relying on Christ and on His finished work, is secure for all eternity. This high priest is never going to die. He died once, never to die again. Oh, friend, how wonderful. As you flee and find refuge and mercy in Christ where He is you have the assurance imparted to you that your salvation is eternally secure.

Then we read, *"and entering into that within the veil, where Jesus is entered as forerunner for us"*. Under the law, the high priest entered into the holy of holies once a year with blood not his own and the people waited outside, wondering, 'Is he going to come out? Is the blood going to be accepted?' And when he came out it was the assurance that God was propitious towards them for another year. And so it went on. The high priest of old could never be described as a forerunner for us but Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us. What does that mean? It means that where He is, the one who has Him as anchor of the soul is

going to be there with Him for all eternity and we will be with Him. Wonderful thought. That is what it means, *"to lay hold on the hope set before us."*

What hope lies before you? The hopes of this world are all bounded by death but the hope that the believer in Christ has reaches into the central point in heaven where Christ is. That hope will be fulfilled when my Saviour comes and calls all who have faith in Him to be with Himself for ever.

In the meantime that struggling sailor, that soul tormented by soul trouble has an anchor now that he can hold onto, an anchor cable that will never break. Paul speaks of that in Romans 8. He lists ten things: death, life, angels, principalities, present things, things to come, powers, height, depth, nor any other creature, and he says, none of them *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:38-39). It is an unbreakable link. Try as he might Satan is not able to break it. The link is secure and firm for all eternity.

Now, I just touch on this passage that I love in Luke 8.

What a situation it was; they were crossing the lake, these twelve men plus the Lord Jesus and the Lord goes to sleep. Suddenly a squall of wind comes down. There were at least four fishermen in this boat. I think the last thing that Peter would have done is to try and go to somebody else for help. He was the kind of person who would have wanted to work it out himself. But eventually, along with the others, he goes to the Master, *"Master, master, we perish"*. They wake Him up and, *"he, rising up, rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm"*. What a Person the Lord Jesus is.

In the same way that He can bring peace and calm to the elements around or to the troubled soul, so He can also bring peace and calm to the troubled believer. Paul speaks of the *"peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:7).

Think of having that kind of peace brought about by the touch of Jesus in your soul. We all have troubles. There is not one person here tonight who does not have some trouble in life, some worry, some concern, some more than others. The Lord Jesus can just reach out His hand and bring in peace and calm.

The Lord said here to the disciples, *"Where is your faith? And, being afraid, they were astonished, saying to one another, Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"* Do you know anybody else who has the power that this One has? The question was asked at the end of Luke chapter 7, *"Who is this who forgives also sins?"* The same Person who has the power to forgive sins has the power to bring the blessedness of peace and calm into every soul in this hall.

Do you know that peace? The One who can control the winds and the waves; the One of whom it says, *"The Father loves the Son and has given all things to be in his hand"* (John 3:35), let Him control everything in your life. Let us put all that we have at His disposal. He has become not only the ruler of the waves and the troubled sea, but He has become controller of our lives and in that way He will lead us to untold blessing.

May God bless the word.

Alex Mowat

A preaching of the gospel at Warley, 3 June 2018.

PRAYER HEARD IN HEAVEN

Daniel 10: 12-19

1 Samuel 7: 2-9

Nehemiah 2: 1-7

Acts 12: 5-17

I want to say a word about prayer heard in heaven. Each one of us here this evening has known what it is to pray. Sometimes the answers to prayer have not come quite the way we wanted them to and that can be discouraging and quite a challenge to faith. But I want to speak tonight of prayer that is heard in heaven.

The disciples felt the need of prayer. They said, *“Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1)*. Have you ever felt like that? Sometimes the thing you are praying for is perhaps too overwhelming, even impossible and you feel you just need to ask the Lord, How shall I pray?

The Lord Himself was a Man of prayer. Think of the prayers of Jesus; the prayer in Gethsemane, *“if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39)*; then just before He chose His disciples, we read that He was all night upon the mountain in prayer (Luke 6:12). Who could be sustained in that, except my Saviour? The prayers of Jesus continue in heaven today, for He takes account of the conditions that every one of us is in and prays in a way that is entirely according to the will of God. I thank God that I have a blessed Intercessor on high who knows me perfectly. He knows my need, and He knows how to offer up prayers on my behalf before God — *“who also intercedes for us” (Romans 8:34)*. Then another verse tells us of the Holy Spirit interceding with *“groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26)*. That is what is proceeding in heaven tonight on our behalf.

Daniel – a man greatly beloved

I read in Daniel because I wanted to speak of a *“man greatly beloved”*. Of course, when you look at the Lord there is no one like Him. He is distinctive in all the perfection and glory that belongs to Him and will ever be so eternally — a Man greatly beloved. I would that our eyes might be turned towards Him more and more. We sing sometimes:

O the sight in heaven is glorious,
Man in righteousness is there.

He is the Man at the centre of a circle of affection that every one of us who trusts in Him has been brought into.

We read here of Daniel that he stood trembling. He had a sense of the greatness of the One to whom he was praying. We can

be thankful that when we pray we speak to One whom we know, One who has come so near. But let us never forget that the One to whom we pray is Himself God. We come into His presence in the acknowledgement of our own weakness but with a sense of the glory and greatness of the One who has all power given into His hand (Matthew 28:18). That is the One to whom we can pray tonight.

Well, the angel took account of Daniel trembling and said, *"Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard"*. Now I want you to note that here is a man greatly beloved. Here is a man who did not see the answer to his prayers straightaway; there was a delay of three weeks, but yet this man greatly beloved knew what it was to pray to God and have an answer to his prayer.

Sometimes I wonder whether my prayers get beyond the ceiling of my room. But what I discover here is that *"from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard"*. Words heard in heaven: words heard in the presence of One who has power to do all things. Oh, may these things stir our hearts that we may be found in the spirit of prayer more and more.

There are many things at the present that we need to pray about, and Daniel felt that too. He was in difficult conditions but he knew the One to whom he could pray, and he had the assurance from the angel that from the very first day when he set his heart to understand and to humble himself, his words were heard.

Would that we might each one have the sense in our hearts of our prayers being heard in heaven. What assurance it brings. You kneel down in your room, you pray to God. Do you listen for an answer? Daniel had an answer and he gets a word of encouragement too, *"Then there touched me again one like the appearance of a man"*. Oh, the preciousness of the touch of the Lord that would just come in to the circumstances where we

are. That His hand should just be placed upon you and that you should have the sense that this is the One who knows all about it anyway. He is the One who answers before you call. That is what Isaiah tells us, *“before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear” (Isaiah 65:24)*. What a privilege it is to have to do with One who will hear our prayers and will come to us where we are.

He says, *“fear not, man greatly beloved; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong”*. Sometimes it is hard to be strong when the pressures of the way almost overwhelm us, when we cannot see the way ahead, when things seem so uncertain and yet they mean so much to us. Ah, here is One who can draw alongside, and the Lord Himself will draw alongside you just where you are. He hears your prayers, He heard them from the first day. He heard them from the day you humbled yourself. He heard them from the day you sought to understand. Now He would give you the assurance of a love that is able for everything and of a strength that is able to meet every exigency of the way. He is with you and will support and encourage you at every step.

Samuel – a man who depended on God

I turn now to Samuel because he is the product of prayer. He had a mother who knew how to pray. I think many of us can be thankful that we have had parents who knew how to pray for us. I would say to younger ones here today – and I do not have any doubt about it – that there are parents who are praying for you for your blessing, and that you may be kept in the pathway of God’s will.

It is not always easy when you are growing up to look at your parents’ admonitions in that way. You do not know what goes on behind closed doors as they pray before God that you might be preserved and that you might be kept. Samuel was the product of such prayer, the prayer of a woman who was distressed. She was provoked and in a difficult situation, and even the priest of the day did not understand. Her husband

certainly did not. And yet she went on and continued to pray. When God answers her prayer, we read, *"and Hannah prayed and said, My heart exulteth in Jehovah, my horn is lifted up in Jehovah; my mouth is opened wide over mine enemies; for I rejoice in thy salvation" (1 Samuel 2:1)*. This is a prayer that has been heard.

Then we find in the section where we read that Samuel is praying. Samuel is a remarkable person. He was lent to Jehovah all the days of his life. He comes into view in a day very similar to our own when things were at a pretty low ebb. The Ark of God had been taken and the priesthood had failed, but Samuel is there in the house of God and he is learning to recognise God's voice.

It is one thing to pray. It is another thing to recognise the answer. Samuel was being taught to hear the answer and to recognise God's voice. Samuel hears a call and he thinks at first that it is Eli calling (see 1 Samuel 3:6), but then he comes to recognise that the voice that had been appealing to him was God's voice coming to him just where he was. So, when we come to chapter 7, Samuel is an example of a man who knows God's voice.

Despite all the failure, Samuel can say, *"Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray Jehovah for you"*. The children of Israel realised that their prayers did not effect very much, but here was a man who had power with God and he gathers the people together. The people drew water and poured it out to Jehovah and they say to Samuel, *"Cease not to cry to Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines"*.

Dear believer, are you prepared to stand as one of those who have heard the word of God to your soul? His touch, His love and His voice have all come home to your soul, and you pray intelligently in relation to the conditions that prevail and you have power with God. What is needed in the present day are persons who have power with God, who have learned the way through soul experience, who have witnessed the failure but who are not

overwhelmed by it, but who rather see the triumph of God's ways, *"Thou canst be hindered in no thought of thine"* (Job 42:2). A man of prayer has that in his heart.

But the very power that Samuel has in prayer arises from the fact that he is a man marked by dependence. He shows that dependence in that he took a sucking lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to Jehovah. Think of the dependence of Jesus when He was here. He depended upon His Father for everything. God had such great delight in Him because of the dependent spirit that marked all He did. This sucking lamb is a picture for us of the lowliness, meekness and dependence of Jesus. That is the spirit that is to be manifest in our pathway here.

I would say to younger ones here today, you may have all sorts of plans, but whatever steps you take, take them as depending on the Lord in prayer. Trust Him for the way ahead, because you cannot see it clearly any more than we could when we were young, but He knows the end from the beginning. Job says in that beautiful verse, *'He knows the way that I take'* (Job 23:10). Yes, He does, and if you have had experience with Him and have heard His voice you will know what it is to have an answer to your prayer.

Samuel offered the lamb as a burnt offering to Jehovah. The burnt offering was an offering of sweet savour to God (see Leviticus 1:9). How acceptable such an offering was and as we pray in a spirit of dependence we are accepted too.

I present this simple illustration to you that we may each one be found here in the spirit of true dependence at the present time. Sometimes there are feelings in our hearts that cause us to be rather independent. We make up our minds to do something in a certain way, or we may try and work out what needs to be done. Oh come into the presence of the Lord, who knows how to do all things well and discover from Him that the way of dependence is the way to triumph in a day of adversity.

Nehemiah – a man in communion with God

Nehemiah comes before us against a background of failure, and he felt it. This is one of the shortest prayers in Scripture. Nehemiah was the king's cup bearer, but when he went into the king his face was sad because he felt the conditions of the day he was in. Jerusalem was burned and in ruins and Nehemiah felt it. He had feelings in accord with the feelings of God in regard to Jerusalem and he longed to do something about it.

The King noticed that Nehemiah was burdened and asked him *"For what dost thou make request?"* (v.4). Now, if it was you or me before the king, the first thing we would probably have said is, 'I want to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city'. But, no, before replying to the king, we're told that Nehemiah *"prayed to the God of the heavens"*. If you want power in prayer your prayer does not need to be long, though it needs to be earnest, and we need to feel things according to God. Nehemiah's words flow from communion with God — *"I said to the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it."*

The result is the wonderful rebuilding of the city. Nehemiah went up to Jerusalem and saw the desolation that had taken place. His heart burned within him that Jerusalem should be rebuilt and that what was according to God should be established. His prayers were not just prayers and no action. When prayer is answered we need to dedicate ourselves to the work of God in order that we may serve the Lord acceptably and in fear, in order that there may be something established which is for the heart of God.

Now there is something further that Nehemiah teaches us in regard to prayer. In chapter 11 of Nehemiah you find another very precious reference to prayer. In verse 17, when the city was rebuilt, *"and Mattaniah the son of Mica, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, who was the principal to begin the*

thanksgiving in prayer". Think of the concern of Nehemiah and all that he went through, but when the work was completed he did not forget to give thanks in prayer!

How wonderful the result of Nehemiah's work is. Think of the two great choirs upon the wall, going around in opposite directions and coming together in the house of God (see v.40), and the service of God that proceeded. It all gives us a sense of what it will be in a day to come, of the complete triumph of God's ways when every right principle of God will be maintained. It all springs from one man's short prayer.

I would just encourage all of us to spend time in prayer, time in the presence of the One who hears the prayers that come from the heart. There are so many things that we pray for, and need to pray for today, so many burdens upon our hearts, so many things we would love to see. There is only One who is able to do it, and in the spirit of dependence we can pray to Him that it may be so. And if it comes from the heart God is going to hear it and God will answer it. Oh, that our hearts might be attuned to God's thoughts, so that after the prayers we might hear the answers and recognise His voice as Samuel did, so that we might know just what to do. Not because we worked it out, but because we have been in the presence of the One who knows the end from the beginning and sees the way through.

Rhoda – the first to see the answer to prayer

Now finally, in Acts chapter 12 we read of Peter's imprisonment. He was asleep in the prison. I think I would find it quite difficult to sleep in the conditions that Peter was in. But perhaps it shows us that he was at perfect peace with God; he was restful there. But whilst he was there the assembly of believers were praying; yet there is something different about this prayer because those praying did not seem to expect an answer. In the prayers that we have considered so far, there was an earnest expectation that the prayers would be answered, but in this company when the answer came they could not believe it. Wonderful grace, is

it not, that God answered their prayer?

We are told that it is the prayer of faith that is answered (see James 5:15). No doubt they were earnest. No doubt there was nothing they could wish for more than that Peter should be released and restored amongst them. But when it happened they did not believe it. Even Peter at first *“did not know that what was happening by means of the angel was real”*. Oh, the sovereignty of divine grace: the wonder of it, that meets our needs when our faith is low.

Prayers are heard in heaven. We may not always realise the power that is in heaven on behalf of the believer when we pray. Here Peter was brought out of prison and he finds his way back to the company, a praying company. It does not say that they had stopped praying. No, they were still praying but when Peter knocked they didn't hear. They were not looking out with expectation to see him coming down the road! Yet there was a little maid there and she heard. Dear young people, there is something for you to do; something for you to be alert to. Peter is knocking at the door, there was an answer to prayer.

Sometimes older ones become discouraged because they have prayed and prayed and nothing seems to have happened. But you are young, you pray, God will hear your prayer and God will answer it, too. If you have known what it is through grace to hear His voice appealing to you; if you have known the touch of His hand upon you in His saving grace to bring you to Himself; if you have known what it is to be brought to the Saviour and to have your sins forgiven, do not let it stop there. Commit your life to Him — you are needed, and He needs you.

This little company in Acts 12 needed Rhoda. What would they have done if she had not been there? How would Peter have gained entrance at all? Well, Rhoda was passing by the door — she was where the Lord could use her. I would like to encourage you tonight to be serviceable to Him, to set yourself to be faithful to Him and to serve Him in the scene of His absence, in the

company where He has placed you. There are things for you to do in serving Him. He needs you and those that are gathered together need you, too.

You can serve Him and you can serve them in ways that the Lord places before you. Opportunities come along, just as they came along for Rhoda here. Opportunities like this in answer to prayer will come along. And even though faith may be waning, yet you can be serviceable to the Master in the place where He has ordered for you to be.

* * * * *

I commend these thoughts to you. Prayer is a wonderful thing. There are lots of scriptures I could have drawn upon in regard to prayer both in the Old Testament and in the New. I would that each one of us might make more time for prayer. I know there are older ones who have often said to me that if they had their time over again they would spend more time in prayer. I would just commend it to those who are young because I am older now and I did not spend as much time in prayer as I should have done. That is why I do not know things as well as I should, and many older ones could say the same. You need while you are young to spend time in prayer. Speak to your Saviour, trust Him and thank Him for all that He has done. Own Him as your Saviour and Lord every day and set yourself to be here faithful to Him, praying daily in dependence upon Him, trusting Him for whatever may lie ahead.

I trust that these scriptures may be an encouragement to you. May they provide little pictures that we can carry in our hearts, illustrations of this precious principle of prayer before God. Let us have the assurance and the confidence that our prayers will be heard and that there will be an answer from God who knows our need.

Keith Wickens

An address at Hampton, 23 June 2018.

Poetry Selection

A CELEBRATION OF A CHANGE OF HEART

The proudest heart that ever beat
Hath been subdued in me.
The wildest will that ever rose
To scorn Thy word or aid Thy foes,
Is quelled, my God, by Thee!
Thy will, and not my will, be done,
My heart be ever Thine!
Confessing Thee, the mighty "Word",
I Hail Thee, Christ, my God, my Lord,
And make Thy name my sign.

William Hone (1780 – 1842)

From an early age William Hone was an avowed atheist. At the age of 11 he had taken a Bible from his godly father and thrown it down the stairs, shouting "I will never open you!" By the time he was 16, Hone was associating with religious sceptics and political agitators and for many years this was the pattern of his life.

Then on New Year's Day in 1832, acting on impulse, he went to the Weigh House Congregational Chapel where Thomas Binney was in the early years of his ministry. William Hone wrote later, "A startling summons was delivered to me in the course of the sermon, and I came away with my mind disturbed, but deeply solemnised. I must be brief. In a very short time it pleased God to break down my self-will, and enabled me to surrender my heart to Him." In 1834 on his 54th birthday, he wrote the verse above as a confirmation of the change that had taken place in his life.

Testimony Section

MARTYRS OF THE MARIAN PERSECUTION

THOMAS HAWKES – MARTYRED AT COGGESHALL, ESSEX 10TH JUNE 1555

There was an unusually large crowd gathered on a bright June day in 1555 to watch the burning of Thomas Hawkes. As the fire burned fiercely up, part of the crowd was watching anxiously as though they were expecting something to happen. Foxe, in the “Book of Martyrs” gives a graphic account of the scene:

‘When Hawkes had continued a long while in the fire and his speech was taken away by the violence of the flame, his skin also drawn together and his fingers consumed so that all thought certainly he was gone, then this blessed servant of God... reached up his burning hands over his head to the living God... and clapped them three times together.’

He then fell back into the fire and was with the Lord.

From one part of the crowd there was an immediate burst of clapping, cheering and cries of ‘God be praised’. Some people jumped up and down with excitement and many exchanged knowing glances and gave praise to God.. Those responsible for the execution, taken by surprise at the reaction and fearing some kind of riot, ordered the crowd to disperse. Those who had joined in the clapping and cheering and knew the secret of it, for secret there was, left the scene of the martyrdom with thankful hearts.

Hawkes had been a Gentleman living in the household of Lord Oxford but after coming to know the Lord as his own personal Saviour he had been disturbed by the worldly life in the Oxford household and returned to his home in Coggeshall where he devoted himself to the study of the Bible.

Soon after returning to Coggeshall his wife gave birth to a son but Thomas did not want his son baptized according to the rites of the Roman church so the baby was not taken to the

church. Failure to do this led to his arrest and his examination by Nicholas Harpsfield, Archdeacon of Canterbury and by Bishop Bonner.

Harpsfield told Hawkes that if his child died unchristened according to the rites of the church then the child was damned and the father too. He asked Hawkes if he did not know that his child was born in sin and that sin needed to be washed away by baptism. Hawkes responded that sin could only be taken away 'by true faith and belief in Jesus Christ'.

Asked by Harpsfield, 'How can your child, being an infant, believe?' Hawkes told him that until a person reached an age when they could believe for themselves, they stood in the faith of their parents, and quoted 1 Corinthians 7:14: *"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."* He also pointed out that he did want his child baptized but not by a Popish priest.

Hawkes was then asked his views on the Mass, confession of sins to a priest, and prayers for the dead. He replied that he



rejected all of these and had all his hope in Christ and His finished work.

He gave a simple testimony to the change that had come about in his life:-

‘...before I came to the knowledge of God’s word I was a foul blasphemer and filthy talker; since I came to the knowledge thereof, I have praised God and given thanks to God.’

Finally with holy boldness, Hawkes challenged Bonner. Foxe records the scene:

Hawkes: ‘Where prove you that Christ or His apostles did kill any man for his faith?’

Bonner: ‘Did not St Paul excommunicate?’

Hawkes: ‘Yes, my Lord; but there is a great difference between excommunication and burning’

Hawkes was condemned as a heretic in February 1555 and sentenced to be burned but he was held in prison until the following June. During that time, some of his believing friends who visited him expressed their own fear of being burnt at the stake and he agreed to make a sign to them. He promised that when he was burnt, if the pain was bearable he would raise his hands to heaven just before he died. When, with only seconds to live, Thomas Hawkes kept his promise and raised his hands above his head and clapped them, they knew that God had made his pain bearable. They burst into applause and glorified God.

Current voices from the past

TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT PRAYER

Background Note

The article below is a slightly shortened version of an article in the Scottish newspaper, “The Witness” on 29th December 1841. It was written by Hugh Miller, the Editor, as a response to some who challenged his view that extempore prayer was far better than what he described as: ‘prayers laboriously

polished in the study before being repeated by rote from the pulpit.' Some minor changes have been made to suit the needs of the modern reader.

The original article is held by the British Library and extracts are reproduced here with permission.

A Scottish Highlander who served in the British forces during the American War [of Independence (1775 – 1783)] was brought one evening before his Commanding Officer charged with the capital offence of being in communication with the enemy. The charge could not have been made at a more dangerous time in the war... There was, however, no direct proof against the Highlander. He had been seen in the gray of the twilight stealing out from a clump of underwood that bordered on one of the huge forests which at that period covered much the greater part of the United Provinces, and which, in the immediate neighbourhood of the British, swarmed with the troops of Washington. All the rest was mere inference and conjecture. The poor man's defence was summed up in a few words: he had stolen away from his fellows, he said, to spend an hour in private prayer.

'Have you been in the habit of spending hours in private prayer?' sternly asked the officer. The Highlander replied in the affirmative. 'Then', said the other, drawing out his watch, 'Never in all your life have you had more need of prayer than now: kneel down, Sir; and pray aloud that we may all hear you'.

The Highlander, in the expectation of instant death, knelt down. His prayer was that of one long acquainted with the appropriate language with which the Christian addresses his God: it breathed of imminent peril, and earnestly implored the Divine intervention in the threatened danger, — the help of Him who, in times of extremity, is strong to deliver. It exhibited, in short, a man who was thoroughly conversant with the scheme of redemption, and fully impressed with the necessity of a personal interest in the advantages which it secures, had made the business of salvation the work of many a solitary hour, and had, in consequence, acquired much fluency in expressing all his various wants as they occurred, and his thoughts and wishes as they arose.

‘You may go, Sir’, said the officer, as he concluded: ‘you have, I daresay, not been in communication with the enemy to-night. His statement’, he continued addressing himself to the other officers, ‘is, I doubt not, perfectly correct. No one could have prayed so without a good apprenticeship’. The officer judged correctly that persons who pray regularly acquire the language of prayer and can speak to God as One who is well known.

Now we are of the opinion that the Commanding officer evinced very considerable shrewdness in this business. We learn to make our common every-day language a ready medium of communicating all our various thoughts and feelings, just because it is our every-day language. The Commanding officer carried the principle a little farther. He argued that the men with whom prayer is a habit acquire the language of prayer; and it was on this principle that he tested the suspected Highlander.

The vocabulary of the chemist, of the mathematician or of geology and botany, however difficult to others, never encumber the chemist or the mathematician, the geologist or the botanist; they serve, on the contrary, to impart clearness to their thinking and fluency to their reasoning, and they do so because long usage makes them familiar ways of expressing what needs to be conveyed.

In the every-day communications which the Christian holds with his God, there are other thoughts conveyed, and other feelings expressed, than those which he employs in every-day converse with his fellows. The recesses of the internal man are laid open; the bias to evil and the hidden moods are confessed and deplored in language varied in accord with the character of the mood; there are appeals for assistance against enemies felt, yet invisible, and the nature of these ever-variable assaults is suggestive of ever-varying petition.

The fact that it is God who is addressed gives distinctiveness to the style. We walk erect in the presence of our fellows. But is there anyone who can prostrate himself before his Maker in humility too profound?

Prayer is so mighty an instrument, that no one ever thoroughly mastered all its keys; they sweep along the infinite scale of man's wants and God's goodness. But, comparatively at least, this instrument has been mastered by every converted person. He acquires the vocabulary of the closet, a language which is the common tongue of those who form the household of faith. We affirm that the ability of recognising this language through that sympathy which soul holds with soul, and that perception through which experience recognises kindred experience, are important elements in this matter for it is one of the ways that persons of true faith recognise the faith of others. Conversely, prayers laboriously polished in the study and repeated by rote, fine addresses to the Deity, are in reality very poor sort of things.
Hugh Miller (1802 – 1856)

WHO WILL TAKE AWAY THE STONE?

“For to this end Christ has died and lived again, that he might rule over both dead and living” (Romans 14:9).

The joyful news of Christ's birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, is quite different from any other history. In the case of other histories we need only read and remember them, to know them. But the Holy Spirit tells us that the gospel is what other histories are not; namely, *“God's power to salvation to everyone that believes” (Romans 1:16)*. That is, a power by which the heart is made happy, blessed, and safe for ever. This then is not a thing to be lightly thought of. I will now explain how, by the news of Christ's death and resurrection, the many hindrances to salvation are removed out of our way.

Godliness and the true faith in Christ have many hindrances, which proceed from our unbelief. Almost always, it happens to us as it did to the dear women who were going to the grave on the morning of the resurrection. A difficulty appeared in their way. As they went along, it struck them that a large stone was lying on the mouth of the grave, *“And they said to one another, Who shall roll us away the stone out of the door of the*

sepulchre?" (Mark 16:3). You must observe that this difficulty never struck them till they were on the road; and although when they were thus on the road it did strike them, they did not turn back! When they came to the grave the stone and the difficulty had both gone.

So it happens with all the difficulties which our unbelief throws in the way of our conversion. By the true gospel of Christ all these difficulties are taken away, as the stone from the door of the sepulchre.

The first difficulty, and a very heavy stone it is, is the great weight of sin—the damning power of the law, and the fear of the wrath of God on account of our sins. The sinner thinks, ‘Ah! I have such awful sins, I have sinned for so long a time, my accusing conscience gnaws at my heart and leaves me no peace! When I think of God's justice and holiness, I am terrified!’ Oh, who shall take away this heavy stone of sin, which lies upon the poor heart, crushes down on the conscience, and leaves the sinner not a moment of peace? If this stone weighs upon your heart, if you do indeed feel the heavy burden of your sins, and if you do not go to seek Jesus, I tell you that this stone can never, never be taken away. It shall lie there; and not only so, but it shall become heavier, till it sinks you into everlasting destruction!

But if you are really in earnest about this sense of sin, if you really long to be delivered from that accusing conscience, from the curse of the law, and from the defilement of sin, then turn to Jesus! Then I can say to you in the name of God, as the angel said to those dear women, *"Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus the crucified one"* (Matthew 28:5).

How then can this stone be taken away? By those mighty words, *"Christ has died"*; therefore do not despair. Christ by His death paid the mighty debt perfectly. He bore the penalty of the sin which we inherit from Adam. He took upon Himself that curse which Adam called down upon man, *"...in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt certainly die (Genesis 2:17).* He took upon

Himself the curse of the law. Sinner, you have sinned, you are cursed. But Christ has become a curse for you; so that now the penitent soul may be assured that in Christ all the burden, all the curse, are taken away for ever. There is no more curse for the sinner who has come to Jesus.

Do not go here or there for help—go to Jesus only! Jesus died for sinners. Go to Him, and seek help from Him alone. Do not let people comfort you in any other way, by saying that your sins are not so bad and the like. This will not remove a grain of the heavy burden. No, plead guilty; say, ‘Yes, my God, I have deserved death. I have deserved hell. All is true that is said in the law to condemn me. I have lived in this and that hateful vice, I have done abominable things. My God, I plead guilty but Christ died for me. To His death, His blood, His great atonement I look in faith, and I look to that only.’

Thus must every penitent soul, who feels the weight of this heavy stone, fly to the open arms of the mercy and love of God in Christ, waiting humbly and in faith till the great power of that love is felt, and peace comes into the weary heart, and the stone is taken away from the door of the sepulchre.

Now, there is a second difficulty, another stone which often lies heavily upon the heart of the sinner. The sinner thinks, ‘God is such a holy God. How dare I come before Him? How can I venture to pray? How dare I draw near?’ *“Who... shall dwell with the consuming fire?” (Isaiah 33:14)*. Yes, this is all true. We dare not trifle with the holiness of God. *“It is a fearful thing falling into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31)*. God is a consuming fire to all the hypocrites in Zion (see Isaiah 33:14), who shall become as stubble in the flames. So long as thou art not seeking Jesus, so long as thou remainest out of Christ, I tell you this stone can *never* be taken away. It must lie upon your heart for ever, and nothing awaits you *“but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and heat of fire about to devour the adversaries” (Hebrews 10:27)*.

But if what you feel is a *true* sense of sin, that you are altogether unclean and unfit to appear before God, and will give yourself fully to Jesus, then I can say to you as the angel said to those frightened women, 'Fear not, I know that ye seek Jesus'. If you seek Jesus, and come *with* Jesus, you need not fear the holiness of God. Why not? How can this stone be taken away? Answer, *"Christ has died."* Christ, by His sufferings and death, opened for us a free and unhindered way to a holy God; not only a way into His perfect glory and blessedness after our death, but a way into His blessed presence here, during our earthly lives.

When Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom. The holy of holies was thrown open. Under the old dispensation, anyone who touched the Ark of the Covenant, which was most holy, and where the glory of God was seen, was at once struck dead. Whoever went into the holy of holies, were it a high priest himself (except on the Day of Atonement), was a dead man. But Christ has died — now all who trust in Christ as Saviour, through the merits and the sanctification of the blood of Jesus Christ, have boldness of access into the holiest place, into the nearest and closest communion with God. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which He has dedicated for us through the veil, that is His flesh ... let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience" (Hebrews 10:20-22).*

Let us who trust in Christ use this blessed privilege more than we do! Christ died, therefore the holy God is become our joy and delight. We can come before Him and we shall not be consumed by His holiness. In love, in faith, in prayer, we may go into the holiest place, and there we shall learn by our own happy experience that the holy God is honoured by His believing people as a dear father is honoured by his children, that the holy God has no terrors to those who draw near in faith, looking unto Jesus.

Thirdly there is another stone which often stands in the way. The sinner thinks, 'Satan has such a great power over me, the world and my ungodly companions hold me so firmly, I cannot get free. Now, 'Who shall take away this stone?'

If you are not seeking *Jesus*, if you do not give yourself up entirely to Him, this stone shall never be lifted from your heart; but you will remain in prison, and Satan, the gaoler, will keep you there. Satan has all unconverted people in his power; he keeps them in his kingdom of darkness. So long as you do not thoroughly give yourself up to Christ, there is no help for you. But if you are hungering after Christ, heartily seeking after Him and honestly desire to be set free from the power of the devil, fear not. Christ not only died, but also He is risen again, and exalted "*above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come*" (*Ephesians 1:21*). Our Saviour has gained the victory over Satan and all the devilish powers of hell.

When the Saviour died, the devil thought, 'Now I have conquered Him! Now I shall keep men in my kingdom, under my power, in my clutches'. The wicked world, the rulers, the Pharisees and Scribes, were glad also, and they thought, 'Now it is all up with Him. Now the people can no longer run after Him. Now they will have to follow us'. They thought the time was come when they might abuse and revile Him with impunity. The chief priests and the Pharisees came and told Pilate, "*that deceiver said when he was still alive, After three days I arise*" (*Matthew 27:63*). They openly spoke of Him as "*that deceiver*".

But what did they say on resurrection morning when Christ rose, and the soldiers brought them the news? And what did Satan feel when he saw the King of glory burst the doors of the grave, and come forth into glorious life – raised for the justification of His people. The devil and his armies must have fallen down then as Dagon did before the ark of the Lord (see 1 Samuel 5:3). Are we seeking Jesus? Are we truly giving ourselves to Him? Then

we need not fear the devil, no, nor a whole army of devils. Let us trust Jesus, and own Him as our Captain and Leader.

Remember how God sent a message to Pharaoh, who was keeping the people of Israel in slavery, saying *"Let my people go"* (Exodus 7:16), but Pharaoh would not free them. In the same way the devil tries to keep souls as his miserable slaves, but Jesus, the risen One, says, 'Let My people go!' When Pharaoh saw that the people of Israel were actually going away he thought he would have one last blow at them and get them back into his power. Just so the devil does, when he sees that a soul is really in earnest about getting away from him. He flies after it. He uses force or fraud, or any means to try get the soul back into his power. He says, 'You will find it impossible to get away, you will find endless difficulties, you will have to give up this and that amusement, and be always denying yourself and making your life wretched. It is much better to give up the whole thing altogether, and follow your natural inclinations, and do what you find pleasantest, and not trouble yourself any more about it'. Such are the lies of the devil. But, dear soul, I charge you not to go back. The Lord will make a way for you, and bring you safely to the end. Do not stay arguing with the devil about it. Moses did not let the people of Israel stand and fight with Pharaoh. Moses said, 'Fear not: stand still, and see the salvation of God' (see Exodus 14:13).

This is just what we must do. We must let our risen Saviour fight for us. With Him we shall go forward, and go straight through all the difficulties; and our enemies shall be put to shame, just as Pharaoh with all his armies were drowned in the Red Sea, whilst the children of Israel went through, and sang a song of victory on the other side. Therefore fear not. Take courage, poor soul. If you feel your bondage, and come to Jesus to be freed, neither Satan nor the world can hold you. Christ shall deliver you, and you shall come off victorious. Turn then to the risen Saviour.

Finally, there is one last stone in the way. We often think that

holiness is a very unpleasant thing. Very often it seems as though the more pious people are, the more misfortunes and miseries they have in this world. And besides all their outward afflictions they have inward temptations and trials of faith. It seems to be a most miserable thing to be a Christian! Now this is indeed a heavy stone lying at the door. It is a misgiving that many people cannot get out of their minds. How is this stone to be taken away? *Answer, Christ is risen!*

Christ, before His resurrection was a despised man, a man of sorrows, a man of grief. Oh, how sad a life He led during those years on earth! But He is risen— all His sorrow is at an end for ever—all His sufferings are over. See now how Christians should look at sufferings and sorrows. When they are afflicted, or mocked and despised, they should look to Jesus; Jesus who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God (see Hebrews 12:2). Let us consider Jesus, and the glorious end of all His sufferings. Let us keep fast hold of this risen Saviour, and through Him we too shall overcome; as Paul says, *"in all these things we more than conquer through him that has loved us"* (Romans 8:37). Whatever happens to Christians, or whatever might yet happen, should never frighten us. All these things which seem so dreadful are only for a very little while. All the Christian's outward and inward troubles, all his shame, and contempt, and everything else which may befall him, are only troubles which last just for the moment. They are a *"momentary and light affliction"* which *"works for us... an eternal weight of glory"* (2 Corinthians 4:17). Yes, even now, out of every sorrow, every shame, every temptation which the Christian has, a glory flows forth, and he can rejoice by faith in all these things. And when the day comes, we shall see all these things transformed into eternal glory, eternal beauty, and eternal joy.

Gerhardt Tersteegen (1697 – 1769)