

Words Of Peace & Truth

No. 94: January – April 2015 CONTENTS

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WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH
(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19)
NO. 94: JANUARY – APRIL 2015

Editorial

This is the first issue of WPT in 2015 (I apologise for its late appearance) and as one year follows another every true lover of our Lord Jesus must wonder if *this* is the year in which He will call us away. The lady who wrote the poem which appears on page 31 was clearly waiting for that moment. May this be true of us all – or do we still linger over cherished ambitions for this present scene? Undoubtedly it is those who long to be with the Lord who are of greatest service to Him in any work that remains in his will to be done before He returns. The apostle Paul was a great example of this: see Philippians 1:21-25.

But we should not be thinking only of our relief at the moment when the Lord Jesus calls us up to Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17). The great event before our hearts should be the glorious appearing of Christ, “when He shall have come to be glorified in His saints and wondered at in all that have believed” (1 Thess. 1:10). Then the One who was here on earth as the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, and suffered rejection and shame, will come in power and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, take up the rights which were once denied Him, put down every form of wickedness and rule for the glory of God. So Paul wrote of a crown of righteousness being laid up, not only for himself but also for “all who love His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8).

In the meantime, the list of saints afflicted in various ways seems to grow ever longer and I trust that the article and poem about the way the Lord chastens us in His love will bring comfort.

G.S.B.

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THE RACE AND THE GOAL

Romans 6:6-12; Colossians 2:6 and 3:1-5

I HAVE referred to these verses in connection with the subject of “the race set before us” and the goal, which is Christ in glory.

Paul had been so taken possession of in his affections by personal acquaintance with Christ that he could say to the saints “Be followers of me, as I also am of Christ.” In the Epistle to the Philippians he presents himself simply as the servant, or bonds slave of Jesus Christ. It is not as apostle that he writes, to unfold the great truths of Christianity, but simply as a Christian, to stimulate others to follow hard after Christ, as he was himself doing. And this is important, because as apostle he had a place which no other had, while all that was true of him as a Christian is possible also for us. As believers in Christ we learn that we too are called to be His bondslaves, and we all ought heartily to take this place. The bondslave is the purchased property of his master, who has absolute control over him, and Paul gloried in this thought in his relation to Christ. If at liberty he was Christ’s slave; if in prison, still *His* prisoner, and content to be wherever his Master placed him, or allowed him to be placed. The love of Christ had captivated and was still constraining him, so that he was prepared to endure anything for Him, and was only desirous to reach Him where He is. He makes known to us this secret in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15. This is the true Christian path and it is a very simple one, though there be no room in it for the flesh. You may say it makes great demands; but there really is no other for the Christian.

This raises the question: why are we left here on earth as Christians? God could have taken us away to heaven immediately we were converted – but this is not generally

His way. The thief, who was converted on the cross at the very last hour of his life, went straight to the paradise of God that day. There have been many death-bed conversions since, we know. But, as a rule, Christians are left many years on the earth and it is important that we should understand the object God has in view in this.

It is that Christ may be formed in us by the work of His Spirit in our hearts (Galatians 4:19) and that thus, during His absence in heaven, there might be a living witness to Him on earth. As God said of Israel in days gone by, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise” (Isa. 43:21). So now the beautiful moral traits of Christ are produced in His own down here as this formative work of the Spirit proceeds. Let us see to it that we are not grieving the Spirit and so hindering His work.

It is a blessed thing to be turned to God in early years and then to accept the truth that you are not your own but “bought with a price,” bondslaves of Christ and of God, to be here henceforth for His glory in the path of His will.

And this is the thought of God for us: may we have grace to answer to it!

But to do so we must have Christ Himself, where He is in glory, as the goal to which we are running. Doctrine of course is most necessary – we cannot get on without teaching – but there is great danger of making a mental study of doctrine and so missing the whole object of it, which is that we should be so affected by it, in the Spirit's power, as to become different kind of people.

Paul, the Christian, in this Epistle to the Philippians, is the expression of the moral effect upon himself of all the truth which he sets forth, doctrinally, in his other epistles, so that he can exhort others to be “followers together of me, and mark

them that walk so.” The Christian's safety is to rejoice in the Lord (chap. 3:1,2), to have Him as the Object of the heart and so to exclude those idols which would usurp His place and God's place in the heart.

Oh, that the living, glorious Christ may be so before our souls in His great love that we may be constrained to go after Him – to press toward the mark!

Coming now to Romans 6:6, we see the expression of His great love to us in this, that He endured crucifixion as God's judgment upon “our old man,” so that we might not be in slavery to sin. We are entitled *to know* that “our old man has been crucified with Him,” and as those that have died in His death we are “justified from sin” (v.7). It never can be laid to our charge. But then it is the love of Christ, in going thus into death for us, which has secured us this liberty, and the effect it has upon us is to draw our hearts in the response of love to Him. So we are prepared to start upon the race to reach Him where He is. It is love to Him, in response to His great love for us, which starts us, and He values the affections of His own.

Then, passing on, let me ask, Have you ever weighed verses 10 and 11? The first speaks of *Christ*, the next of *us*. “In that He died, He died unto sin once.” It is not sins which are in view here, but the principle of sin. He came into a world characterised by sin, *i.e.*, lawlessness and independence of God, but He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Then at the end of His pathway of perfection, lifted up upon the cross, He was *made sin* for us, bore the judgment of God upon it, and passed out of that condition by death. He lived always to God when in this world of sin, but now He lives to God where sin can never come, and in verse 11 we are exhorted to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, as identified with His death, and alive to God in Him, Christ

Jesus our Lord.

But what I desire to emphasise is that He endured all this because of His great love for us, and He looks for response from our hearts. Paul is an example to us of a heart wholly won, and his controlling desire was, in his own words, “that I may know him.” May this be the case with us too!

Now Colossians carries us further than Romans. In this latter epistle we see Christ risen from the dead, and alive to God, after having died to sin once for all; and we are entitled to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. But in Colossians we are taught to take resurrection ground, as **RISEN WITH CHRIST**. These three last words are the key to the teaching of this epistle, and they are not found in Romans. They speak of new ground taken, and not merely of clearance from liabilities and of a new life upon the old ground.

This new ground is that upon which God sees His saints to-day, and their privilege is, by faith, to take account of themselves as God takes account of them. Here is the verse: “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead” (chap. 2:12).

There are thus three steps in faith:

(1) Faith in His blood (Rom. 3); (2) Faith in God who raised Christ from the dead (Rom. 4) and (3) Faith in the operation of God, by which we are ***risen with Christ***. Until this last step be taken we are not on proper Christian ground in our soul’s apprehension. It becomes us therefore to ask ourselves whether we have taken it. If we have, then our desire will be, as Paul’s was, to reach Christ actually where He is in glory.

Let us beware then of taking up Christian doctrine as a

mental study, but rather seek grace to set our mind on things above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. So the Spirit of God will lead us on, weaning our hearts from all that is on the earth, and fixing them more and more upon Christ as their Object.

The Lord grant it for His name's sake.

Revised notes of an address by A.S. Loughnan, reproduced from "The Believer's Friend" (1910).

GOD'S RELATIONS WITH MEN

Revelation 4:11; Jude 24, 25; Philippians 4:20

I SEEK help to speak about God, and the blessed relationships in which He would have us to know Him and to worship Him. These scriptures refer to Him as our Creator, as our Saviour, and as our Father.

When we speak of God as Creator, we are thinking of Him in the very widest way, for we form part of a vast creation, which evidences His eternal power and divinity. It displays His infinite power and wisdom, raising Him in our thoughts far above the most elevated of His creatures. He is the eternal God, and in the light of the New Testament we can speak of Him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for each Person of the Trinity, so known to us, is God fully, absolutely and eternally, co-equal in being and glory from all eternity. I feel this to be the most profound and holy matter we could speak about, and yet it affects the youngest of us, because the knowledge of God is the very basis of our relations with Him. It is where we all begin and, in a sense, it is where we all end.

The Holy Scriptures speak to us first and foremost about God. They begin in that majestic way, which must impress every sincere soul that opens the holy pages of Scripture – "In

the beginning God.” We are brought to a point where our minds cannot penetrate, to the verge of eternity, and we are in the presence of a Being who is infinite, who has no beginning and no end, eternal and supreme. The very name, God, indicates His supreme and infinite power, and it is thus that He would first present Himself to the creature. So we have God before us, the One who created the heavens and the earth, and as we read the Holy Scriptures, the wonderful record of His ways with men, the revelation of His thoughts, purposes and counsels, we are brought to the moment when it is said, “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). How much lies between those two points of time! The expression “in all” involves that myriads of persons like ourselves have been brought to the knowledge of God. He has become known in their hearts, minds and affections so that He is the supreme Object of their worship. He dwells with them and in them, in that blessed and holy intimacy which He has brought about, in accordance with His own eternal counsels, but all through the Lord Jesus Christ coming into manhood and that great work of redemption upon the cross, where He shed His precious blood, so that God might have a righteous basis for persons like ourselves to be at home in His presence. And then the Holy Spirit has been given, that we might have nearness inwardly and consciously, and have capacity too, to answer to God in praise and worship.

I believe the Lord Jesus would impress the youngest heart with the thought of God’s glory as the Creator. It is where we begin in our thoughts of God. The Preacher speaks to his hearers and says: “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1), as though he would fortify us in the days of our youth to remember our Creator. We are not to remember Him with any sense of dread or terror, but to have a right and holy fear of God. We are to reverence Him, but at the same time we are to be assured of His deep and personal interest in us.

The verse in Revelation 4:11 is a wonderful ascription of praise coming from the twenty-four elders. The elders suggest maturity in the knowledge of God, and how they worship Him and speak about Him. There are many in these days, who speak about God in a distant kind of way. Pure and simple atheism is not in fashion at the present time.* Men have learnt enough about the wonders of creation at least to see the folly of ruling out a supreme Being; but then even “demons believe and tremble,” and they will not refuse such a thought as that. What Satan would seek to do with each one of us is to weaken the sense of a *personal* Creator, who desires that we should know Him and who has moved towards us, so that we should be at home in His presence. This is what is brought out so wonderfully in the Scriptures. “Thou art worthy, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy will they were, and they have been created.” God has not just operated in some distant or haphazard way, but He has created all things in pursuance of a great and wonderful plan for His own will and pleasure. We have been set in His creation to be for His will, not for our own pleasure and self-gratification.

Then God as the Creator has thought about His creature; He has taken account of the needs of His creature. He upholds all things and sustains all things in life. It is not as we might make a piece of machinery and start it in motion, and leave it to work for a time, but all life depends continually upon God Himself. So scripture says, “If He only thought of Himself, and gathered unto Him His spirit and His breath, all flesh would expire together” (Job 34:14, 15); and Daniel could say to one of old, “the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified” (Daniel 5:23).

**In the half-century since this address was given atheism and evolution have been revived very aggressively – Ed.*

We need to be further impressed with the majesty and glory of creation. Satan in these days has energised men to bring forward all kinds of ideas and theories, often promulgated with a great show of finality, as if they were proved, but they are not proved. They are to a large extent the product of man's imagination and unbelief in order to shut out from our hearts the sense of a personal God who created and sustains all things and for whose will they were and have been created.

It is also said in Hebrews 11:3 that "the worlds were framed by the word of God." That brings out the personality of God. "He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). That is the God who is your Creator and whom you are to remember in the days of your youth, and we are to remember Him continually. Peter in his epistle encourages Christians in their sufferings to "commit their souls in well doing to a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4: 19). So the thought of a faithful Creator is to enter into our thoughts at all times in our lives.

Then we have received our spirits directly from God. God has ordered that we have our fathers and our mothers; it is part of His wise ordering in creation that we should thus come into the world, but our spirits have come directly from God. Scripture says that the spirit returns to God who gave it, and that distinguishes mankind from every other part of the creation. That is God's ordering in regard to men. I am speaking of the human spirit. Other living creatures are not said to have spirits in the sense that we have; for we have been formed in the image and likeness of God, so that we might have to say to God, and that involves that our souls and spirits are immortal. Death is not the end; the spirit returns to God who gave it. This enhances to us the greatness and glory of the Creator and raises exercises with each one of us as to our

relations with Him, for we must have to do with Him directly. We must spend eternity either in His presence or at a distance from Him.

The Lord Jesus, when He was here, loved to speak about God and of creation. He spoke about the lilies, the ravens, and the natural objects with which the disciples were acquainted. There are things which form part of our lives and which we may take as a matter of course, but as we come under the teaching of the Lord Jesus and of the Holy Scriptures, we learn to connect them with God. I would counsel the young people, when you go out into the country for your holidays and see the wonderful works of God, to let your mind connect them with God Himself. Let there be a touch of thanksgiving and praise to God. Then all the mercies, the relationships of life and the human affections with which we are surrounded, would be used to give us a blessed understanding of God, who framed and formed these relationships for our happiness, so that there might be an answer in thanksgiving and praise to Himself. We are not to be like those at the beginning of whom it could be said, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," Romans 1:21. That was the beginning of the decline and the terrible descent to the heathen world, which we see around us. They left God out of their minds as their Creator and they came under all the darkening power of Satan, the god of this world.

The next great theme is that God is our Saviour. What a blessed light in which God has been pleased to present Himself, and how soon the light of it came into His ways! We see from the early chapters of Genesis how soon sin came into the creation, Satan, the serpent, introducing wrong thoughts of God and distrust of God into the heart of man, and how God came in, as He had to, in holy and just retribution and judgment, but how at the same time He brought in the light of

salvation and redemption. God has righteous claims in regard to salvation and redemption. God has righteous claims in regard to our responsibility before Him. Sin brought in distance and God cannot tolerate sin, so that further thoughts about God are coming forward, not only His wisdom, power and goodness as a Creator, but His righteousness, holiness and hatred of sin. Then over against the dark background of man's sin and God's righteous judgment, the wonderful light of divine grace shines out in the prophetic word from the very beginning and is summed up in these three precious words, "God our Saviour." Those words are implied in the early promises which God made in the garden of Eden, pronouncing judgment upon the serpent, the man, and the woman, but speaking of the woman's seed – "he shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel," Genesis 3:15. We understand, in the light of the New Testament, that the power of Satan would be broken by One who would come into a place of suffering, indeed into death, to bear the judgment of God against sin, to taste death in all its reality as the power of Satan and the judgment of God, in order that men might be redeemed and brought to the knowledge of Himself. Then the nakedness of the sinners was clothed by God Himself. They had sought to cover their nakedness with fig leaves, as men will with their own efforts in one way or another, but God provided a covering which would meet the claims of His own justice. "Jehovah Elohim made Adam and his wife coats of skin, and clothed them," Genesis 3:21. How the grace of God shines out, throughout the pages of the Old Testament! People refer to 'the God of the Old Testament,' as though He were a different God altogether. Do not listen to these thoughts. It is the same blessed God that we know in Jesus, moving in His own way; the light shining out already in type and shadow, waiting for the moment when it would shine out in its full lustre when the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world. So we

find in the Old Testament, types of the Lord Jesus and His precious death presented by the Spirit in various ways, all leading up to the full disclosure of “God our Saviour.”

The doxology in Jude sums up the impressions which the writer would desire to leave upon all our spirits. This book brings out all the sinfulness of man, the most terrible presentation of sin, because this is not the heathen world, but the Christian world. Apostasy is coming in, the darkening influences of Satan affecting the minds and hearts of professing Christians, who have the full light of God in revelation before them and the Holy Scriptures in their hands. So Jude leaves us with this most wonderful presentation of God: “To him that is able to keep you without stumbling, and to set you with exultation blameless before his glory, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might, and authority, from before the whole age, and now, and to all the ages. Amen.” This brings before us the glory of this presentation of God, which He desires that every one of us might appropriate. It reaches out in its bearing to the whole of the human race, for “God ... desires that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). I would commend the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus as working out this wonderful title of God – “God our Saviour.” All has come into display in the Person of the Lord Jesus, “the Man Christ Jesus.” The seed of the woman, spoken of in the Old Testament, has now actually come into the world to save sinners, and He gave Himself a ransom for all, the great sacrificial basis on which this title of God rests eternally. He can save sinners in full consistency with all that He is, for the majesty and glory of His throne and His holy nature are brought into the greatest possible relief in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation comes through believing the testimony that God is rendering by His Spirit. If you are not saved, you have the opportunity of

turning to God in faith and putting your trust in the Lord Jesus, the One “who gave Himself a ransom for all.”

There is something majestic and authoritative about the words of the Holy Scriptures, which must impress every sincere heart and conscience as being the real words of God. Paul’s epistles to Timothy and Titus have especially in mind the days in which we live, presenting God in His majesty and glory, but at the same time in the blessed way in which He has drawn near to men in order to be known and loved and worshipped as “God our Saviour.” The scope of the work of Christ reaches out in its efficacy to every man, woman and child, but only those who believe, who take their place in repentance and faith and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, are brought into the blessed results. They can say “God our Saviour” from their hearts.

I would like to encourage the youngest believer to think of God and speak to Him and of Him in this blessed way. **God** is your Saviour. That wonderful Being, the blessed God, has been pleased to reveal Himself as your Saviour, so that you can think of Him as you think of Jesus, for Jesus is “the mediator of God and men” (1 Timothy 2:5). The Lord Jesus did not come to incline the heart of God towards men, or to reconcile God to men. He came to reconcile men to God. He came because God desired the blessing of men, to express the heart of God to men, and to bring us near to God in righteousness, holiness and peace.

Paul, writing to Titus, speaks of “God, who cannot lie” (Titus 1: 2), and he speaks of “the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men,” and then of “the kindness and love to man of our Saviour God” – expressions which the Holy Spirit would write upon our hearts so that we might have a deeper sense of the feelings of the blessed God in regard to men. He speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then of the Holy

Spirit “which He poured out on us richly,” so that we might be completely free in our relations with Him, and be marked too as those who “adorn the teaching which is of our Saviour God in all things.” As we go to our school or our daily work, as we live our lives at home and amongst our fellow-men, what a privilege and dignity to adorn the teaching of our Saviour God in all things! It may be that we are not in a position to say very much, but there is the testimony of our lives – subjection, righteousness, grace, forgiveness, yieldingness – the features which shone out in the Lord Jesus. What opportunities we have day by day to express something of the character of our Saviour God in all things! What a privilege is given to us, as knowing Him, to represent Him amongst our fellow-men! May we all have a fresh apprehension of the blessedness of knowing God as “our Saviour God,” implying as it does, the mission of the Lord Jesus, the glory of the work of redemption, and also the blessed operations of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

In the epistle to the Philippians, chapter 4, we have that wonderful verse, “But to our God and Father be glory to the ages of ages. Amen.” In referring to the relations which God has taken with men, surely this is the crown, that God should be known by us as our Father. This brings out the counsels of His love, for God in the sovereignty of His will has been pleased to make Himself known in this way. He had in mind from all eternity that He should have sons before Him, those who are creatures indeed and the subjects of redeeming love, but standing before Him in the dignity and glory of sonship. The title “Father” comes down to our daily needs. He is “Our heavenly Father.” He takes account of His children in weakness and need in our pathways here, so that we can address Him as our Father who knows that we have need of certain things and will provide them in His grace and in His goodness. But then it reaches up to this great thought of divine counsel and purpose. The Lord Jesus Himself, standing on this

earth as a holy Man, could lift up His eyes to heaven and say, “Father,” and that is the character in which God would be known by us. He would not have us worship Him on any lower ground than that.

The Lord Jesus, before He went to Heaven, sent that message by Mary Magdalene, “I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17). It is wonderful that we are privileged by divine grace to stand before God in the acceptance of Christ, “accepted in the Beloved,” all on the ground of redemption, and by the Holy Spirit to lift up our hearts to God and address Him in the language of known relationship as Father. He “has sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6); that expression implying the greatest possible nearness and the greatest possible intimacy – the language that was used by Jesus Himself at the hour of His sorrow in the garden of Gethsemane. It is for us to appropriate this, and in faith and by the Holy Spirit, to know that God Himself is our Father. Shall we not receive and accept it? Are we not glorifying God by freely entering into the privilege that He has conferred upon us at such a cost, that we should know Him as our Father? He is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In the epistles of the New Testament, this great thought is brought forward continually. In writing to the Thessalonians, believers who were only recently converted, Paul addresses them as “The assembly of Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” and in his second epistle he says: “in God our Father.” The thought of God *the* Father brings out the revelation of God in grace, and *our* Father stresses our own personal relations with Him.

I believe the Lord would encourage us to look into the Scriptures, to be like the Bereans, who were “daily searching

the scriptures if these things were so” (Acts 17:11). As we look into the Scriptures in dependence on the Holy Spirit we shall have enlarged thoughts of God. May our consideration lead to great joy and liberty in the knowledge of God! May we also develop a deeper spirit of reverence, for the fear of God is a vital matter in our Christian lives. We have the liberty and joy of knowing Him as our Creator, our Saviour and our Father. As we apprehend the way He has moved towards us thus, we shall be led to an apprehension, as far as the creature can have it, of God Himself, in all the glory of His being, the One who dwells in unapproachable light, but who has come into expression in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and our hearts will be led to worship Him, to bow before Him and we shall find our greatest joy in disappearing from our own view and having Him before us in intelligent worship.

Address given in Johannesburg in 1957 by Walter M. Brown.

EIGHT THINGS EXPRESSED AT THE CROSS.

“And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him.” (Luke 23:33.)

THUS briefly and concisely is recorded an event which exceeds in marvel and wonder every other event in the world’s history. The consequences of that event are stupendous, beyond our poor powers of expression.

The Creator and Sustainer of the universe suffered death – and an ignominious death – at the hands of His own creatures in order that those creatures might be saved; and all His work of redemption was in full accord with the mind and heart of God, whose will He came to do. The crucifixion is an event so far reaching in its consequences, that the human heart can apprehend but little of its fulness, although by faith in the cross, and in Him

who hung upon it, all the blessings which the heart of God can bestow flow out for man in a glorious and never-ending stream.

Let us ponder over eight matters which are revealed in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:–

First, then, the cross shows the *maximum of man's guilt*. Man had been tried under varying circumstances – Adam in innocence, Noah under government, Israel under law, the Gentiles under a monarch, such as Nebuchadnezzar – and always the sad story of human failure. The heart of man is evil, and wickedness continually issues from it in one form or another (*Mark 7:14-23*). The full exposure of human guilt could not be made until the cross was set upon Calvary, and then it was shown in all its cruel hideousness.

What was spoken in a parable concerning the lord of the vineyard and his husbandmen was revealed at Calvary as a reality. “Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him, when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.” (Luke 20:13-15) The Christ of God who had come to make known the heart of the Father, and whose hands dispensed the mercies of God in no stinted or uncertain manner, was “by wicked hands crucified and slain.” He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; He went about doing good; by His power the blind received sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised, and the poor had the gospel preached to them.

None ever sought Christ and went away unblessed; devils owned His name; sickness fled before Him; multitudes were fed by His bounteous hand; good – nothing but good – and that in a volume and of a character hitherto unknown – flowed in full tide

from His person. And yet the cry of the crowd was: “Not this man, but Barabbas, Crucify him, crucify him!” When the question, “What think ye?” was put, “they answered and said, He is guilty of death” (*Matt. 26:66*).

“Guilty of death”! The holy, spotless victim was pronounced unworthy to live; and thus the cross brought out the maximum of man’s guilt.

Next, the cross *maintains God’s righteousness*, for by it God shows how He can be just, and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus. If man is to be saved, salvation must be in accordance with the righteousness of God.

God could not pass the sinner by,
His sin demands that he must die;
But in the cross of Christ we see
How God can save, yet righteous be.

The death of Christ meets the demands of the throne of God. The wages of sin are taken, the curse of a broken law falls upon the sin-bearer, and God is for ever glorified. We have not to do with a God who overlooks or condones sin, but with a just God, so that the vilest who turns to Him for salvation can, in full accordance with divine righteousness, be saved.

But if the cross shows the *maximum of man’s guilt* and if it *maintains God’s righteousness*, it is also the *manifestation of God’s love*. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” (*1 John 4:9*). Divine love was the same from all eternity, but it was not known in all its greatness till One came who was great enough to declare it. Creation displayed the power and wisdom but not the heart of God; His wonderful dealings with nations and peoples of old gave glimpses of all that He is changelessly for man. But none was able adequately to show Him forth until in the fulness of time a divine being, the “express

image of his person,” came amongst us as a Man among men. In every act of His life Christ revealed the heart of God, and He aptly answered the cry of Philip, “Show us the Father,” with the reproachful, words: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?” John 14:9).

In His death the Lord Jesus fully revealed the truth that God cannot look upon sin, and He revealed also that God is love. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The cross is also the *means of God’s salvation being made accessible* for man. Without it there is no hope for humanity. The seven words which were spoken from the cross – “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” – express the means by which salvation is secured. The flood-gates of eternal love are lifted, and the blessed tide flows over the solemn scene of the death of Christ. There is no other name given amongst men by which we must be saved. If there had been any other means of salvation, if God’s love had been less or His righteousness less, would the prayer of Gethsemane, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (*Matt. 26:39*), have remained unanswered?

Once more, the cross is the *measure* of God’s grace. Picture a rectangular* triangle with all its sides equal. Measure the cross if you can, there is but one thing which measures its shame and that is its answering glory. Be sure of this, that the glory resulting to Him who humbled Himself will be in due correspondence with the degradation. As I learn what the one was I gain a truer estimate of the other. Two sides of the triangle – the side of shame and the side of glory – are equal. But there is a third side. *God’s grace* equals the shame and equals the glory, and so the cross of Christ measures as naught else can what the grace of God is to man.

* *Perhaps the author meant ‘equilateral’ – Editor.*

“The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” Here we see set forth also in that cross, a *motive for* service – the love of Christ. That love “passeth knowledge,” and yet, as Paul assures us in his paradox, it is knowable and enjoyable. No other motive can compare with that of His love – the love which led Him to die for such as we are – the wretched, the helpless, the Satan-bound. He died for me as truly as if I were the only person in the wide world, and yet not for me only, but for *all*. What a motive is supplied for seeking to serve the Lord Jesus Christ! First, there is Christ’s great love for me personally, and then there is the love wherewith He loved all. Oh, tell of this love; whisper it in the ear of the needy; speak of it in your houses to the two or three; preach it, if you can, to hundreds and thousands; write it with your pen; print it in the papers; spread it through every nook and corner of the land. Teach it to your children; proclaim it to your servants; leave none around you ignorant of it. Hang up, in letters of boldest type, the words, “With his stripes we are healed.” Sound aloud the marvellous story of His love – loud as the trump of doom – and make men hear, whether they will or not.

Next, the cross is the *mark of separation from the world*. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (*Galatians 6:14*). Those were the words of a beloved servant of the Master, and what he put into words he carried out in practice. We tread a world stained with the blood of the Saviour – a world which He entered in a stable, and which He left by a cross. Are we seeking to find our rest and our home here without Him? A thousand times, no. Our hearts look on to the time when we shall hear our Lord’s voice, and be caught up in the clouds to meet Him, and when we shall be taken by Him in triumph to the mansions prepared for us in His Father’s house.

Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,
With all thy boasted store;
We'd not have joy where He had woe,
Be rich where He was poor.

The cross is the theme of the *melody of heaven*.

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (*Revelation 1:5, 6*).

Join the song of heaven, with a heart set upon a worthy Object
– a living, loving, coming Saviour.

And when in heavenly glory
My ransomed soul shall be
From sin and all pollution
For evermore set free;
My soul shall then still praise Him,
And loud His grace extol;
Thou hast Thyself redeemed me;
Yea, Thou hast done it all.

Do not wait for that day, though it is glorious to look on to it, but here and now in this dark scene, amid all its trials and sorrows, add your note of praise to the continuous song of heaven, and learn that there, as here, the theme of the cross supplies entrancing melody. E. C—P.

The Remnant in Jude

Jude 20-23

No one can deny the conservative character of Jude's epistle; I mean by “conservative” the *keeping of that which is good*. Notice, for instance, the expression in the first

verse, “*preserved* in Christ Jesus;” and that in the 21st, “*Keep* yourselves in the love of God.” It is the same root word in both cases.

The apostasy is not far off, and, morally speaking, Christendom has left its first estate since many a long year. It is a serious thing to be living in an age when men are ready to throw off the very form of Christianity. Surely we cannot be blind to the fact that soon the mantle shall be discarded, seeing, as we can, to follow the illustration of the fable, the wolf’s ear above the shepherd’s cloak.

Departure from original estate, and utter contempt for all authority, are the two great things which characterize this epistle; there is a kind of gradation, no doubt, in the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Core; for self-will and murder are followed by corrupt practice, and finally by open rebellion against God.

We are living, beloved brethren, in these last and evil days – days in which a railing judgment is lightly passed upon all established authorities, and when mockery is applied to true godliness. Judgment must fall upon the whole scene; and Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had so foreseen the crisis, that he had said, “The Lord has come amidst His holy myriads, to execute judgment against all” (Darby Trans.), anticipating the terrible issue of this world’s history. We are not to be astonished at the state of things, for all has been foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us look at the final exhortation, and notice the peculiar position and service of the little remnant amid all the desolation around. There is one bright spot, as one may sometimes see one bright ray coming through the clouds in a dark and lowering evening landscape.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Spirit should characterize our state – keeping yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. There is true edification and true prayer, not merely an assent to certain doctrines; and thus we are kept in the love of God, in His unchanging, infinite love, while we await the day in which we shall enter into His glory, and be in our home forever. Children of the day, we wait that moment when we shall be glorified, and shall be in the proper sphere of that life which we already have in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Notice that “mercy” characterizes this epistle; it is displayed to us every day and every hour, and shall crown our whole history upon earth, when the Lord shall come to take us out of this dark world, before Enoch’s vision be accomplished.

It is very blessed when there is true building up and true prayer; it is not merely “by” or “through” the Holy Ghost, but it implies also a spiritual state, so that the prayers are truly for Christ’s glory, even in the midst of all the evil of the last days. (Compare John 16:23, 24.) Then comes a special service, needing spirituality – the service of separating the precious from the vile.

Jeremiah, in the 15th chapter of his prophecy, was separate from the assembly of the mockers when Jehovah sent him to take forth the precious from the vile; and so in Jude’s epistle there must be a state of spiritual vigour and communion (may we have more of it!) before we attempt to help others. I well remember, many years ago, trying to pull a lad out of the water, and *falling into it myself*.

Spiritual discernment is needed so as to be able to pluck out of the fire some who are in it; fear too, lest, in accomplishing this difficult work, one’s own garment be stained. It is a wonderful and blessed service amid all the corruption; and the maintaining of a spiritual state, of the consciousness of God’s infinite love to us, and

of a sense of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, are needed every moment of our lives; otherwise, we might be overcome of evil.

The last two verses bring before us the power of the only God our Saviour, who is able to keep us and sustain us in a critical time and a difficult service. We ourselves have been delivered, and He will use us to the very end of our course for the deliverance of others. May we have faith in Him. There will be loud shouts of joy when the victory shall be proclaimed before the universe; in the meantime, may we depend upon our Saviour God.

To Him that is able to keep you from falling (that is, without stumbling), and to present you faultless before His glory with exceeding joy (with exultation), to the only God our Saviour, through Christ Jesus our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority, both now and to all the ages. Amen.

Edward L. Bevir (1847-1922)

Christ leading us to the Father

John 17

Throughout this gospel we have the Lord Jesus bringing the Father before us. In the first chapter we have: “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, **He** hath declared Him.” For those who had eyes to see it, all that the Lord Jesus said and did revealed the Father. He spoke what the Father gave Him to say and did what the Father gave Him to do (*see ch. 5, vv. 19 and 36; ch. 8, v. 28; ch. 12, v. 49; ch. 14, v. 31; ch. 17, v. 4*). His food was to do the will of the Father who had sent Him and to finish His work (*ch. 4, v. 34*). He could say that He lived on account of the Father (*ch. 6, v. 57*) – His Father was everything to Him. Then He told His disciples that the love with which He loved them was the same love as He knew with His Father (*ch. 15, v. 9*). Everything was to direct their thoughts to the

Father. So in chapter 14 the Lord Jesus says to Philip, “He that hath seen me has seen the Father” (*verse 9*).

Now in this prayer the Lord Jesus expresses His desire that His disciples might know their relationship with the Father: “This is the eternal life, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” Then He identifies them as “the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world” (v. 6) – they were the love-gift of the Father to Christ. In verse 11 He asks that the Father should keep them in His name, as He contemplates His own return to the Father.

In this prayer, in speaking of what lay before Him the Lord focuses not on the circumstances of His death – the cross and all the associated suffering and shame – but on His return to the Father: “And now I come to Thee” (v. 13). What a contemplation this is for us! – to consider Christ not as the world saw Him in His rejection and shame but as the Son returning in all His dignity to the Father whose will He had completed in every particular.

As He returns to His Father He desires that something of His own relationship with Him should be reflected in those who belong to Him: “that they may be all one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ...” (v. 21). Then we see the unselfishness of the love of Christ for His own in that He desires to share His *glory* – the glory the Father had given Him – and His *place* with those whom the Father had given Him (*verses 22 and 24*).

Of course, our entering into these wonderful things depended on the death of Jesus. “Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit” (*ch. 12, v. 24*). So it was in resurrection that the Lord Jesus said to Mary, “Go to My brethren and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God” (*ch. 20, v. 17*).

What a privilege it is to be so brought by Christ before His Father – the Father who loved Him before the foundation of the world and who loves us too with that same love. Oh, that we might know the blessedness of these wonderful, divine relationships in greater measure!

Based on a word given by Geoffrey Bacon at a meeting for the breaking of bread, 15th March 2015 – included by request.

DISCIPLINE

“My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Proverbs 3:11). This is a very distinct mark of Wisdom’s children, for it is written, “If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons” (Heb. 12:8). Everything that tries us, that is a check upon us, that causes exercise of heart, and makes us sensible of weakness in ourselves, is of the nature of chastisement. It may come in the way of difficulties in the path of faith; or in the shape of such trials and sorrows as are common to men – loss of property, loss of health, or bereavement; or it may be as the governmental consequences of sin; but in one way or other *all* have it. It is “for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:10).

That is, it serves to break down that which is not of God in us, and thus it is a real help to us.

I cannot now go into the subject at any length, but I should like to call your attention to the twofold admonition in connection with it. The two things against which we are warned are *Despising* and *Fainting*. “*Despise* not thou the

chastening of the Lord, nor *faint* when thou art rebuked of him” (Heb. 12:5). To *despise* the chastening of the Lord is to treat it as if the Lord had nothing to do with it, as if it had happened purely by chance. Suppose I take cold and am laid aside by it, and I take it just as a matter of course – perhaps blaming myself for not being more careful – I think that is despising the chastening. It may be true that I was careless in exposing myself unnecessarily to a draught, and that as a natural consequence I took cold. But behind all that the Lord permitted it for my profit, and if I recognize the Lord’s hand in it, and bow to His dealing with me, I shall get blessing out of it. It is wonderful what rest and peace one gets under the chastening when one recognizes the Lord’s hand in it. The moment you turn to the Lord, and your heart says, I wonder what the Lord intends to teach me by this, the character of the chastening is altogether changed for you. Not that it is removed or altered, but it wears quite a different aspect to you. You own the Lord’s hand in it, and then you are divinely exercised by it.

It is very common for believers to say, But my chastening is the result of my sin and folly. I am just reaping what I have sowed. How can there be any blessing in that? Well, my brother, if you have judged the sin and folly, and got right with the Lord about it all, you will be most ready to own *His* hand in the chastening. You will bow under it in subduedness of spirit, and humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and such is His infinite grace that He will now make the consequences of your sin *a great spiritual help* to you. If *the Lord’s* hand is in it, it is surely for your blessing. Then do not for a moment allow yourself to cherish the *cold* despairing thought that you are suffering under the action of an inflexible and mechanical law of nature. Your suffering is “the chastening of the Lord.”

It seems to me that the Corinthians present to us an example of men who *despised* chastening. Many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept, and yet there does not appear to have been any recognition that this was the hand of the Lord. This shows that ministry may be used to enlighten us as to the object of chastening. Paul's epistle gave them light, and recovered them from the terrible condition into which they had fallen.

The second danger is that we may *faint* when we are rebuked of the Lord. The recognition of the Lord's *love* would preserve us from this. If we recognize *the Lord* in it, we shall not despise it; if we recognize His *love* in it, we shall not faint under it. "Whom the Lord *loveth* He correcteth." The consciousness that the chastening is all the outcome of divine love will preserve us from fainting. You may have heard of the singer who went to a great master to be trained, and who, to his great surprise and disappointment, was kept singing one sheet of exercises for six years. Very weary did the pupil become of his exercises, but at the end of six years the master dismissed him as a perfect singer. The weary exercises had done their work in training and developing his voice, and all unknown to himself he had profited immensely by them. Many bitter hours of vexation would have been spared him if he had had unwavering confidence in the master's love. We, like him, have to go through our exercises, and often there is a sameness and monotony about them which makes the tendency to weariness very great. We are often inclined to think that the chastening is doing us no good, and that it is more a hindrance than a help. Beloved brethren, let us remember that a Master Hand has ordered those exercises for us, and deep eternal *love* is behind them all. How blessed to be able to look upon every trial and difficulty, upon every pressure and cause of exercise, as an express

token of the Lord's love! We feel it to be “not joyous, but grievous;” it is a very real check upon us – it would not profit us if it were not; but we know the love that is behind it, and this is enough.

The Thessalonians give us an example of the liability to *faint*. The enemy seems to have used their tribulations and persecutions to discourage them, and to make them think that they were suffering in wrath from the Lord. The apostle writes to them to beseech them not to be “soon shaken in mind,” or “troubled,” and he speaks to them as “brethren *beloved of the Lord*,” and prays that their hearts might be comforted by “our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, *which hath loved us*, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace” (2 Thess. 2:1, 2, 13, 16, 17). He seeks to confirm their hearts in the assurance of divine *love*, as the great preservative against the tendency to faint.

Extracted from “The Paths of Life” by Charles A. Coates.

POETIC PAGES

“Consolation in Christ”

Philippians 2:1

CHRIST, our Lord, our consolation,
Sweetest streamlets from Thee roll,
Turning every tribulation,
Into blessing to the soul.

Are we labouring 'neath temptation;
Do the angry storm-clouds rise?
Christ is all our consolation;
Deepest gloom before Him flies.

Or the waters of affliction
Ceaselessly around us roll?
Christ is all our consolation;
He alone can then console.

Or the furnace burning fiercely,
Seems at times *too hot* to bear?
Christ is all our consolation;
He is *with us* – even *there!*

Does the pilgrim way, so weary,
Cause both heart and flesh to fail?
Christ is all our consolation;
Through His strength we must prevail.

In our home, where consolation
Will abound for evermore,
Christ will still be all its glory,
He the One whom we adore.

E.G.

THE LORD'S COMING

Lord, we're waiting for Thy coming,
For that moment now so near;
When the voice of the archangel,
And the trump of God we hear.

When we hear Thy voice, Lord Jesus,
And Thy blessed face we see;
Caught into the air to meet Thee,
We shall in Thy likeness be.

Oh! the rapture, blessed Jesus,
Of that meeting in the air;
We shall be for ever with Thee,
And shall then Thy glory share.

/P.T.O. ...

Share the Father's love unhindered,
In that home with Him to be;
Sharing too with Thee Lord Jesus,
Joys for all eternity.

Thus, we're waiting for Thy coming,
Blessed Lord, to take us Home;
Thou hast said Thou wilt come quickly,
Even so, Lord Jesus, come.

Bessie Barter 1883-1969

NOTE

The Editor trusts that the selection and composition of material for this magazine has been undertaken with the Lord's guidance and that the contents are of moral and spiritual value and appropriate to present needs. The only infallible statement of truth, however, is found in the Holy Bible and the reader is, therefore, urged to follow the practice of the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Editor is always happy to receive comments and inquiries, and to consider suggested articles for inclusion in future issues.