

# Words Of Peace & Truth

## No. 110: May – August 2020 CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Three Signs ( <i>A.J. Sheldrake</i> ) .....	35
Worship ( <i>W.T.P. Wolston</i> ) .....	36
Response to Christ in Heaven ( <i>T.H. Reynolds</i> ) .....	42
Take My Yoke upon You ( <i>C.H. Mackintosh</i> ) .....	47
The Importance of the Holy Scriptures ( <i>J.N. Darby</i> ) .....	51
The Lord is Faithful ( <i>E. Rogers</i> ) .....	52
Lessons from a Garden ( <i>Editor</i> ) .....	53
Note re Household Baptism .....	60
Poetic Pages .....	60

## WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH

*(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19 and Jeremiah 33:6)*

**No. 110: May – August 2020**

### Editorial

It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that we are living in very uncertain times. Whether we think of Covid-19 and its impact on health, livelihoods and the national economy; or of the unrest in many nations, most recently in Lebanon; or of the ravages of locusts in Asia and Africa; or of forthcoming national elections, etc. – no-one can predict tomorrow with any certainty. Indeed, the Bible says, “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1).

Yet people are still busy with their modelling methods, predicting gross domestic product into the future and how people will spend their money, how house prices will move, what climate change will do, and so on. But, to quote another proverb, “Many are the thoughts in a man’s heart, but the counsel of Jehovah, that doth stand” (Prov. 19:21), and, while we do not know the timing of the Lord’s return or exactly how He will accomplish all the details of the scriptural prophecies yet to be fulfilled (mostly after the “catching up” [1 Thess. 4:17] of the church), we *do* know that the Lord is “watchful over [His] word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:12 – Darby Trans.). All that He has foretold in the Scriptures about coming events will indeed come about and all His promises to those who believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be kept.

The Bible shows us that sometimes God uses some small or obscure event to accomplish His ways. The future King Joash was taken in his infancy and hidden by his aunt for six years before the

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*Editor: Geoffrey Bacon, 58 Byron Avenue, Coulsdon, Surrey, England.CR5 2JR Website: [www.wordsofpeaceandtruth.co.uk](http://www.wordsofpeaceandtruth.co.uk)  
E-Mail: [g.bacon707@outlook.com](mailto:g.bacon707@outlook.com) Tel: 020-8660.2915*

downfall of the wicked queen Athaliah (2 Kings 11:2,3). The military authorities in Jerusalem were alerted to the Jewish plot against Paul through what his nephew overheard. So we never know what seemingly little thing God will use to achieve His plans.

Readers may be somewhat surprised to see articles on worship in two successive issues but I had not seen the helpful comments of Dr. Wolston when I compiled the article in WPT No. 109 and think that the extract now provided expresses essentially the same truth, perhaps more clearly. G.S.B.

### THREE SIGNS

*Isaiah 7:10-14; Matthew 1:18-23, 16:4 and 24:29,30.*

When we read Scripture it is important that we not only take account of what it says to us, but also *why* it says it. In Isaiah chapter 7 King Ahaz is invited by God to ask for a sign “either in the depth, or in the height above.” Ahaz, who was an idolatrous king, replied that he would not tempt Jehovah. It was hypocrisy on his part which wearied God, who then gave him the sign of the virgin with a son who should be called Immanuel, God with us. That sign was fulfilled many centuries later as recorded by Matthew. The birth of Jesus Christ was unique, for He was not of Adam’s order; He was the Second Man out of heaven, our sinless Redeemer (1 Corinthians 15:47).

But why was Ahaz offered two other signs – in the depth or in the height above? The answer can also be found in Matthew’s Gospel. The sign of Jonas is the sign in the depth and the sign of the Son of Man in heaven is the sign in the height.

In Matthew 16 we find hypocrisy again. The Pharisees and the Sadducees ignore the many miracles the Lord had done and ask for a sign from heaven. The Lord instead gives them a sign from the depths, the sign of Jonas. Jonah expresses to us the depths to which our Saviour went on account of our sins, depths which we

can never fathom; but Jonah also speaks of resurrection, for he was brought up “from the pit” (*KJV margin and Darby Trans.*) after three days and three nights (Jonah 2).

Unlike the other two signs, the third sign still awaits its fulfilment, but the day will surely come when the Son of Man appears in heaven and the Lord’s word to the high priest will come to pass (Matt. 26:64; Daniel 7:13, 14). Every eye will see Him on that day, not coming in grace as when He rode into Jerusalem on an ass, but in power and great glory.

May we be awaiting His coming again to receive His rightful place that was denied Him so long ago and is still denied Him in the world around us!

*Substance of a word given by Tony Sheldrake in a meeting for ministry in Croydon.*

## WORSHIP

Addressing the Corinthian Assembly, Paul says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” The temple is the House of God in its most sacred aspect – the Assembly. God dwells in it by the Spirit – for “ye are the temple of God:” hence the terrible sin of defiling it. What is your thought of a temple? No man’s house is a temple: God’s house is, as occupied by God, and God’s Spirit making Him known. We must get hold of the double thought – it is the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells there. It is where His presence may be known, and where His blessed Spirit dwells for that very purpose.

There is a remarkable verse in the Old Testament that connects itself in my mind with this – “In his temple doth every one speak of His glory,” or, as the margin translates it, “Every whit of it uttereth his glory” (Ps. 29:9). What is the meaning of that? There is not a thing in His temple, says the Psalmist, that will not utter His glory. You say, If we are that temple then we are here for that object.

There is a great truth in that – I commend that verse to you. Study it, pray over it, ponder it; and you will find out that if you have learned what it is to be of God’s temple, there is something very grave about it, as every whit of it is to utter His glory. How could that glory be uttered unless His presence be known and enjoyed? The thought is very beautiful – He is in His temple just to make His presence known to His people, that their hearts should turn back to Him in worship, delight, and praise. Our Lord says in Psalm 22: “I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee” (ver. 22). There, in the Assembly, the blessed Lord, the Man, declares the Father’s name, and becomes Leader of the praises of His people.

You will say, that is Psalm 22, but it might not have the peculiar application I have given it. Go, then, to Hebrews 2, and read what is there said regarding His singing in the Assembly. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (ver. 11). Who is he that sanctifieth? Christ; and “they who are sanctified”? – all Christ’s, every one that belongs to Him – they “are all of one” – of one stock, one set, one place before God as set forth in the risen Man. It is the place that Christ’s brethren – the Assembly – have before God; hence it says, “For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

I hope you would not call the Lord Jesus your Brother, not even “Elder Brother.” Thomas will teach you better, as you hear him speak on the second Lord’s Day, when Jesus was among His disciples. He was not present the first Lord’s Day, and he missed a fine meeting. It is a great mistake to miss a meeting with God’s people. The next Lord’s Day Thomas was present, and the Lord spoke to him. Mark his response: “My Lord and my God” (John 20: 28). There is a reverence due to that exalted Being, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we must maintain, and that we must ever preserve in our own souls. Of His saints it says, “He is not ashamed to call them

brethren” – sometimes we fear He might be, as we think of our life and ways. He is looking at the Assembly, however, as that which He has redeemed by His atoning sufferings and blood-shedding; He has presented it to God, and “He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee.” Wonderful, indeed, is it to hear Him sing praise. How does He do it? Do you not understand? Then you have missed the great point of Christianity if you have not got this. To be, here on earth, in His Assembly, where you have His presence, hear His voice, and are conscious of His leadership, as He is leading the praise, is wonderfully blessed – every whit of that temple is to be vocal with God’s glory, and the risen Man leads it.

You say, I thought we should get that by-and-by, when we get to heaven. Yes, but we are also to have it down here. How are we to get it, you say? Well, that is the question; the Spirit of God alone can lead us into it. Now look at the temple, and see how the Spirit of God works in the Assembly. The temple is connected with worship, and where can I get worship? Only in the midst of God’s people, who form that temple. I meet a crowd to-day in the street hurrying along. I know some of them and I say, Where are you going? “Oh, to church.” “What for?” “Dr So-and-So is going to preach.” And do you call that worship? Oh no, that is not worship, that is ministry, quite right in its place, but ministry is not worship. There is tremendous confusion in the minds of Christians about these matters. You may say, “What are you doing this afternoon? You are speaking on God’s Word.” True, but I am only exercising any little gift God has given me for the good of His people, or those not yet converted if such be here – but this is not a worship meeting, nor is it the Assembly. The Assembly, in function, consists only of the Lord’s people, born of His Spirit, and indwelt of His Spirit, gathered together in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, confessing the blessed truth that there is one Body, and when so gathered,

subject to the guidance and control of His Spirit. The chief object of the Assembly when so gathered is the Lord's Supper – the showing of His death, which leads to praise and worship of the highest kind.

What is the difference between ministry and worship? Worship goes up to God, and ministry comes down from God. If you come and hear me speak, and get a little help, thank God; but that is ministry, not worship – it comes from God to you, though He may use a human vessel. But worship is what we read of in John 4: “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and he would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well (fountain) of water springing up into everlasting life” (vers. 10, 13, 14). That is what the Lord says to the poor Samaritan woman. It is to her He also says, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (vers. 23, 24).

Do you know what the Lord Jesus did and is doing? He came “to *seek* and to *save* that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He is still ranging the world to find sinners to save them. The Father is *seeking worshippers*, and it is only His children that can be such. You cannot get worship from the world; it knows Him not. Pharaoh wanted to get the Israelites to put up their altar in Egypt. No, said Moses; and he was quite right. The world is a scene under judgment. We, like Israel, must go three days' journey into the wilderness, so to speak, before we can hold a feast unto the Lord. There must be downright separation from this scene, and that is what Christianity is. You are brought by the death and resurrection of Christ out of this scene, into relationship with Christ, and you find yourself in the company

of the risen Man. He is the Leader of the worship of God's Assembly, and none but God's people are there.

What about the world? It is outside. What are you going to do with them? Leave them alone while we worship; they cannot worship. Worship is the overflow of a full heart – the outflow of a heart that enjoys God; but the man of the world does not know Him. I would leave them alone very severely so far as worship is concerned, for they know nothing about it. But on the other hand, when not engaged in the worship of God with our fellow-saints, we should seek to be in season, and out of season, carrying the blessed gospel of God to them. Then when they have believed and received the gospel and also the Holy Ghost to dwell within them, we should like to see them in the bosom of God's Assembly, and will heartily say, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" (Genesis 24:31). But as long, my hearer, as you are unconverted, you are really outside, you have no place in God's Assembly, for of you it is as true as of Simon, you have "neither part nor lot in this matter" (Acts 8:21). That is drawing a very hard and fast line, you say. I did not draw it; I did not write the Scriptures. You see how God writes, and what He says. People have such strange notions in their heads about "the Church." They must all "join the Church" – whether converted and saved is often a question not raised – and they go in troops, and God's people are thus swamped and spiritually hindered, if not actually buried in Christendom's systems, which avowedly admit believers and unbelievers to similar privileges – such as the Lord's Supper. True spiritual worship under those circumstances is an impossibility.

Now let us look at 1 Corinthians 12 and its connection with chapters 13 and 14. You will remember that Paul wrote to Timothy, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7). The spirit of power is seen in 1 Corinthians 12 – the Holy Spirit; the spirit of love is found in chapter 13 – the spirit of Christ; and the spirit of a sound mind is what marks

chapter 14. Study these three chapters, and you will find it to be so. The persons who possess the gifts of the twelfth chapter must be imbued with the spirit of the thirteenth, or they will be of no use in the fourteenth, where you have the Assembly in function. ...

...

In the Assembly the Spirit should control every motion. “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15). God’s Assembly is marked by prayer – the expression of dependence – and singing, which is the outlet of the heart’s joy. Some people think it is not spiritual to sing – I do not think they have the Spirit’s mind. Paul says, “***I will sing with the spirit***, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” (ver. 16). Here is worship; blessing and giving of thanks. What a lovely picture of the Assembly in function. It is marked by ministry that profits, and prayer, singing, and worship. That is what God’s Assembly is put together for, to turn to Him in prayer, song, and worship. It is the New Testament analogue of Psalm 29:9 – “Every whit of it uttereth Thy glory.”

Worship is a most important function of God’s Assembly. But what is worship? It is not thanksgiving – it is more. Thanksgiving is gratitude and blessing for what God has given; but worship is the delight of the heart in what He is. It is the soul finding its delight in God – its rest in the revelation of Himself, in Christ. It is not merely gratitude for blessings conferred, for what you have got, though that be not forgotten, but your soul is delighting in Himself, and that is what God looks for. One saint expresses it for all the rest, and the Assembly says Amen. In what takes place in the Assembly God likes warmth and fervency, and if a brother prays to, or worships God, one likes to hear a hearty Amen. There will be a worship

meeting by-and-by, in which the Assembly will take part, and hear an Amen that will reverberate through creation. “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen” (Revelation 5:13, 14). There is a deep diapason note in that Amen. Sometimes brothers pray and lead in worship, yet there is not a sound at the end. I believe if the heart is right there will go out an Amen, a ‘so be it.’ You are putting your seal upon that which the Spirit of God elicits, and God looks for that.

*Extracted from “The Church: What is it” (1904) by Dr. W.T.P. Wolston.*

## **RESPONSE IN THE SAINTS HERE TO CHRIST IN HEAVEN**

*Revelation 3:7-13*

BELOVED friends, I am not going to enter into any exposition of the Epistle to the church of Philadelphia. I read this scripture in order that we should recall a little what was before us yesterday – that we should give, in some little way, while down here, a response to the desire of Christ about us. Yesterday we had before us, that our bodies should be full of light, or luminous; and this afternoon, if there was one thing the Lord brought before us, it was, how much we need at this present moment that there should be such a ministry of Christ amongst us as to produce reality, that things should be true in our souls in formative power. It is easy to speak of doctrine, and it is surely necessary to know truth; but what we need is Christ formed in us by the power of the Spirit, so that, as in Colossians, the new man should be displayed.

The characteristics of the new man are to come out in each one of us. And I ask, will the result of these meetings be that Christ will be formed in us, so that there may be an answer to His heart? Not a putting of ourselves forward, as those who are acquainted with truth graciously recovered for the church; but rather, as Moses, when he came down from the mount, having been with God, he wist (*knew*) not that his face shone. So is the exercised soul, the one who is really making progress; that is the one who thinks how little progress he has made, and that everyone else has made more. But where the soul is in real nearness to Christ, and He is so before it (*i.e. Christ is so before the soul – Ed.*) that He has become formative in it, there will be seen a change. From that person Christ will come out, not by doing some great thing, but something of Christ will be seen; there will be an answer to Christ in him. ·

What has been greatly pressed upon me is, that we should not go away from these meetings without the impress of Christ being stamped on us, so that the traits of the new man should come out. Are we to go back to our localities – to the various companies of saints with whom we are usually associated – more spiritual? And if they are to be companies of saints answering to the true character of the church, it is most important that there should be some answer to Christ *from us*. We who minister cannot blame the saints, for if the truth were in more power in us, and if we ministered Christ more, if they had seen more of Christ in us, much trouble that arises in the assembly would be avoided. It is not mere knowledge, but the ministry of Christ. It is of more consequence that Christ should be displayed, that there should be an answer to Christ in us, than that there should be greater intelligence in the truth.

In Thyatira we see the judgment of the great successional church. God wrought outside it at the time of the Reformation to maintain a light when the great successional thing is given up

to its deeds by Christ, and for the first time a remnant is marked, to wait for the Lord. What I press is, that the work of God to maintain the light was outside of the great successional system. Protestantism, represented by the church of Sardis, was the outcome of this work. Christ's judgment of Sardis is that it had a name to live but was dead: a fair outside, but there was nothing that answered to Christ, nothing to respond to His character. There was not anything to find fault with, but when you come to look at it in the light of the grace received there is nothing there that responds to Christ.

Now what characterises the church in Philadelphia is, that there *is* a response to Christ; there is but little church character, but they are those who *do* respond to the character of Christ as the holy and true One. There is this, that when the great successional church is all ruined, and orthodoxy in Sardis is only a name, there are those who respond to what Christ is while He is in heaven. He can look down upon a remnant and say, "Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." There was but little strength, but they did respond to this character of Christ – "He that is holy, he that is true." And what is seen here? Christ opens the door, and none can shut it, and before them He sets an opened door. That is, He gives to them a path like His own. To Him the porter opened (*John 10:3*), when everything in Israel at the end of the dispensation was ruined. The result was that there was not a single sheep in the Jewish fold who did not hear His voice and respond to it (*i.e. in reference to those whom the Lord called "My sheep"* [vv. 26, 27] – *Ed.*)

We may well ask, Are we the people who minister Christ to souls? While able to explain the truth, are we personal exponents of it? Are we so filled with Christ Himself that when we speak of Christ to others, we do not merely tell them of Him or give an exposition of truth, but being in the power of it ourselves a person should feel, well, I see a little bit in that man

of what he is expounding. Like the woman in John 4, who said, “Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did.” Those to whom she spoke saw reality in the person herself. She speaks as one who has tasted the grace that supplanted herself.

Is the desire of our hearts that Christ should be set forth by us as by those who, beholding the glory, are changed into the same image? (*2 Corinthians 3:18*). Would to God that I could speak of Him to you better. I commend to your consideration the Epistle to the Colossians. See all that Christ is in His fulness in chapter 1; “complete in him” in chapter 2; and then go on to chapter 3, where Christ is everything, and the new man put on that all its traits may be developed. You must get to know the Head, and all the fulness and blessedness there is in Him, and as you draw out of His fulness you will be found like Him here.

We are in days of weakness and brokenness, but an open door is set before those who respond to His character down here. Then how blessed the promise, “him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” Response in weakness down here to what He is, and full association with Himself up there. Reward is connected with the kingdom. Are we content to wait for the place of full association with Himself till then? What we have here in this church (Philadelphia) – a little strength, and nothing of ecclesiastical position – is not that which man owns. Those of the synagogue of Satan claim the ecclesiastical position, but if you are content to wait, there is not a single thing of Christ in any of us which is the fruit of keeping His word and not denying His name that He will not own. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God ...” (ver. 12). It is in the

new Jerusalem, but it is all Christ that we see in it. If I think of gold, or of the pearl, it is all Christ, but what is of Christ should come out in us now! Do we keep His word? That is the revelation of Himself; it gives us what is true in Him, and is now to be true in us! (*see 1 John 2:6, 8 – Ed.*) It is to dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16), and whatever we do is to be done in His name.

Another thing He connects with this answer to Himself in us is keeping the word of His patience. That is not being something here. Not doing any very great thing, but being like Christ. He waited patiently for Jehovah to hear Him and bring deliverance out of sorrows, and now He waits in patience for the Father to give Him the kingdom. I think the trouble that came in lately may have been because we thought we knew a great deal and wanted to *be* something. As was remarked yesterday, we had got a great deal of light and truth, but we were not morally in the power of it. The pretentious thing is characterised in the Epistle to Philadelphia as the synagogue of Satan. The overcomer is the one who has kept His word (the revelation of His character) and has not denied His name. There is a special feature in keeping His word, it is that of keeping the word of His patience, and He gives the blessed word to cheer our hearts, “Behold, I come quickly.” If I want thus to respond to Christ now, I shall like that day to come when I shall be with Him and be fully like Him; and then, too, God will have *His delight* in the church, because it will be the holy temple in which every whit of it utters glory (Ps. 29:9, KJV margin), all of it radiant in the beauty of Christ. Besides this, we are to be the perfect *display* as the new Jerusalem of all that Christ is. The traits of the new man should come out in us morally now, the fruit of keeping Christ’s word; and if we feebly respond to it now, what will it be in that day to display to all created intelligences the grace, counsels, and thoughts of God, all coming out in the display of

that which will be the new man, the expression of Christ Himself for ever?

What joy it will be to Christ to have us there according to the full revelation of all the thoughts of God carried out in those He has made perfectly like Himself, to be the expression of the perfect love of God and of His delight in Christ throughout eternity.

*Word given by T.H. Reynolds during meetings at Quemerford, Wiltshire, in May, 1892.*

### **“TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, AND LEARN OF ME”**

It is a great thing always to submit ourselves meekly under the hand of God. We are sure to reap a rich harvest of blessing from the exercise. It is really taking the yoke of Christ upon us, which, as He Himself assures us, is the true secret of rest. “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (*Matthew 11:28-30*).

What was this yoke? It was absolute and complete subjection to the Father’s will. This we see, in perfection, in our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He could say, “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” Here was the point with Him. “Good in Thy sight.” This settled everything. Was His testimony rejected? Did He seem to labour in vain, and spend His strength for naught and in vain? (*Isaiah 49:4*) What then? “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.” It was all right. Whatever pleased the Father, pleased Him. He never had a thought or wish that was not in perfect consonance with the will of God. Hence He, as a man, ever enjoyed perfect rest. He rested in the divine counsels and purposes. The current of His peace was unruffled from first to last.

This was the yoke of Christ; and this is what He, in His infinite grace, invites us to take upon us, in order that we too may find rest to our souls. Let us mark, and seek to understand the words, “Ye shall *find* rest.” We must not confound the “rest” which *He gives* with the “rest” which *we find*. When the weary, burdened, heavy laden soul comes to Jesus in simple faith, He gives rest, settled rest, the rest which flows from the full assurance that all is done; sins forever put away; perfect righteousness accomplished, revealed, and possessed; every question divinely and eternally settled; God glorified; Satan silenced; conscience at rest.

Such is the rest which Jesus gives, when we come to Him. But then we have to move through the scenes and circumstances of our daily life. There are trials, difficulties, exercises, buffetings, disappointments, and reverses of all sorts. None of these can in the smallest degree touch the rest which Jesus gives; but they may very seriously interfere with the rest which we are to find. They do not trouble the conscience, but they may greatly trouble the heart; they may make us very restless, very fretful, very impatient. For instance, I want to preach at Glasgow; I am announced to do so; but lo! I am shut up in a sickroom in London. This does not trouble my conscience, but it may greatly trouble my heart; I may be in a perfect fever of restlessness, ready to exclaim, “How tiresome; how terribly disappointing! Whatever am I to do? It is most untoward!”

And, how is this state of things to be met? How is the troubled heart and the restless mind to be calmed down? What do I want? I want to find rest. How am I to find it? By stooping down and taking Christ’s precious yoke upon me – the very yoke which He Himself ever wore in the days of His flesh – the yoke of complete subjection to the will of God. I want to be able to say, without any reserve, to say from the very depths of my heart, Thy will, O Lord, be done. I want such a profound sense of His perfect love to me, and of His infinite wisdom in all His dealings with me, that I would not have it otherwise, if I could; yea, that I would not move a finger to alter my

position or circumstances, feeling assured that it is very much better for me to be suffering on a sickbed in London, than speaking on a platform in Glasgow.

Here lies the deep and precious secret of rest of heart, as opposed to restlessness. It is the simple ability to thank God for everything, be it ever so contrary to our own will, and utterly subversive of our own plans. It is not a mere assent to the truth that “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” It is the positive sense, the actual realization, of the divine fact that the thing which God appoints is the very best thing for us. It is perfect repose in the love, wisdom, power, and faithfulness of the One who has graciously undertaken for us in everything, and charged Himself with all that concerns us for time and eternity. We know that love will always do its very best for its object. What must it be to have God doing His very best for us? Where is the heart that would not be satisfied with God’s best, if only it knows aught (*anything*) of Him?

But He must be known ere the heart can be satisfied with His will. Eve, in the garden of Eden, beguiled by the serpent, became dissatisfied with the will of God. She *wished* for something which He had forbidden, and this something the devil undertook to supply. She thought the devil could do better for her than God. She thought to better her circumstances by taking herself out of the hands of God and placing herself in the hands of Satan. Hence it is that no unrenewed heart can ever, by any possibility, rest in the will of God. If we search the human heart to the bottom, if we submit it to a faithful analysis, we shall not find so much as a single thought in unison with the will of God – no, not one. And even in the case of the true Christian, the child of God, it is only as he is enabled, by the grace of God, to mortify his own will, to reckon himself dead, and to walk in the Spirit, that he can delight in the will of God, and give thanks in everything. It is one of the very finest evidences of the new birth to be able, without a single shade of reserve, to say, in

respect to every dealing of the hand of God, “Thy will be done.” “Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” When the heart is in this attitude, Satan can make nothing of it. It is a grand point to be able to tell the devil, and to tell the world – tell them not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth – not merely with the lips, but in the heart and the life – I am *perfectly satisfied with the will of God*.

This is the way to find rest. Let us see that we understand it. It is the divine remedy for that unrest, that spirit of discontent, that dissatisfaction with our appointed lot and sphere, so sadly prevalent on all hands. It is a perfect cure for that restless ambition so utterly opposed to the mind and Spirit of Christ, but so entirely characteristic of the men of this world.

May we, beloved reader, cultivate with holy diligence that meek and lowly spirit which is, in the sight of God, of great price, which bows to His blessed will in all things, and vindicates His dealings, come what may. Thus shall our peace flow as a river, and the name of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be magnified in our course, character, and conduct.

Ere turning from the deeply interesting and practical subject which has been engaging our attention, we would observe that there are three distinct attitudes in which the soul may be found in reference to the dealings of God; namely, subjection, acquiescence, and rejoicing. When the will is broken, there is subjection; when the understanding is enlightened as to the divine object, there is acquiescence; and when the affections are engaged with God Himself, there is positive rejoicing. Hence we read, in the 10th chapter of Luke, “In that hour Jesus *rejoiced* in spirit, and said, *I thank Thee*, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” That blessed One found His perfect delight in all the will of God. It was His meat and drink to carry out that will at all cost. In service or in

suffering, in life or in death, He never had any motive but the Father's will. He could say, "I do always those things that please Him" (*John 8:29*). Eternal and universal homage to His peerless name!

*C.H. Mackintosh (1820-96)*

### The Holy Scriptures

If we get occupied with the state of things in the world around us, and in the church of God itself, our hearts would sink within us, did we not fall back on this most blessed truth, that Christ knows all about it.

But then does He say that they (in Philadelphia) have nothing? No; He says, "Thou hast kept ***My word***." That which characterised Christ must be the characteristic of faithfulness in the last days. Paul in writing to Timothy says, "In the last days perilous times shall come," and there would be a terrible form of godliness without power; for even then the mystery of iniquity had come in, "and evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." But the safeguard is, "but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" – the plain written word, what we call the Bible, read from his youth. Security would not be in the manifestation of outward power, nor yet in miracles, but simply in the written word. This was the instrument of blessing; this the recognised authority with Timothy. Of course the grace of God was needed for his conversion. I refer to this now, as the keeping close to the word is the special security of these latter days (namely, the special authority of the word of God itself, just what Timothy, as a child, found in the Scriptures); and added to this, of course, with Timothy, was that which he had learned from the apostles, equally inspired, and which was thus a known immediately-divine authority in a person "of whom," says the apostle, "you have learned it," and which has become the written

word to us. The written word of God is where all our security lies through grace.

.....

God has most graciously allowed that there should be a distinct manifestation of every spring and form of evil that could ever possibly arise before the canon of Scripture was closed; that we might have the judgment of the written word of God on every evil as it arises. And without this we should not be able to detect the exceeding subtlety of the mystery of iniquity which is still working on, but, having the written word as our guide, as God's children we are called on to judge everything by that alone. ... The only sure and safe standing-place of the man of God, in this day of increasing iniquity, is the Holy Scriptures."

*J.N. Darby (1800-1882): Collected Writings Vol. 5, New Series (Addresses to the Seven Churches), pp. 349-350 and 373-4.*

### **THE LORD IS FAITHFUL**

*"... that we may be delivered from unreasonable [evil, lit. out of place] and wicked men: for all men have not faith. But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil" (2 Thessalonians 3:2,3)*

The contrast between verse 2, "have not faith," and verse 3, "But the Lord is faithful," is intended by Paul to be dramatic. The first characterises evil people, who seek to enslave believers in the Lord Jesus into what is opposed to the free course of His word and its glorification. The second characterises the Lord Jesus himself who is able to strengthen and preserve us from such influences.

How vital it is, for us who possess 'faith' and with it the desire to please God in our daily lives, to look away from our own resources and the influences in the world around us and rely more and more each day on the Lord Jesus Christ, who "is faithful" to His promises and His purposes of love and grace.

But how many difficulties seem to get in the way! So easily we can get ‘down’ in spirit as the Christian journey through this world may seem at times too hard to cope with. So then we can think it easier to follow the ‘wide road’ rather than the ‘narrow.’ Financial and work problems, or lack of work, may overwhelm us. Many people we encounter demonstrate opposition to Christianity or indifference to it, blaspheme, are perverse or maybe unkind. Whatever our experience of these things may be, the wonderful thing is that we shall unfailingly find in Jesus one in whom we may confidently confide our every thought, difficulty and need.

With what result? We will find that He listens and understands it all, and provides abundant encouragement and reassurance that to follow Him is always worth it. His powerful arm will lift us up and in the words of our verse “shall (not may!) stablish [strengthen, cause to stand firm and be resolute] you and keep you from evil.” The Lord Jesus will never abandon His own cause of ensuring that “I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish; and no one shall seize them out of my hand” (John 10:28).

In the last two verses of the previous chapter Paul has directed the readers’ hearts to the love of the Lord Jesus and God the Father, resulting in the giving of encouragement or “consolation and good hope” which are “eternal” – all directed at strengthening the believers in every good work and word. Then lower down in 3:5 Paul directs their hearts into “the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ.” What assurance, what an example for us He is!

May these thoughts be a blessing to us.

*Edwin Rogers, 2020.*

## **LESSONS FROM A GARDEN**

The apostle Paul wrote, “Does not even nature itself teach you?” (1 Corinthians 11:14). Indeed, throughout the Bible natural things are often used to illustrate God’s truth. Thus Israel is likened

to a vine or vineyard (as in Psalm 80:8, Isaiah 5:1-7 and Matthew 21:33-46). The Lord Himself drew attention to the birds of the heaven and the lilies of the field in teaching the people (Matt. 6:26 and 28); used the Sower going forth to sow in the parable of Matthew 13 and likened His own death to a grain of wheat falling into the ground. Then He spoke too of Himself as the Vine and of his disciples as the branches (John 15). The apostle Paul spoke of the saints as “God’s husbandry” (1 Corinthians 3:9).

My wife and I have a medium-sized garden, to which we give fluctuating attention. We realise that it does not qualify as one of our heavenly blessings (Ephesians 1:3) but regard it as among the things which God has given us richly for our enjoyment (1 Timothy 6:17) – though not for us to over indulge to the exclusion of more important, spiritual things.

When working in our garden recently it has occurred to me that it is capable of teaching us a number of moral and spiritual lessons, which I would like to submit for your consideration.

1. **Weeds can grow through small cracks.** To help keep the weeds down, we have had a few flagstones laid in an area which is not easily accessible. The flags are not, however, cemented together and a few weeds have succeeded in finding their way up through a gap of one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch (say 3-6mm.). This has reminded me of how *the flesh (old nature) can intrude through small things* in our lives and in the gatherings of the Lord’s people. Paul exhorts us to “put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12) – if there is a chink in it, we can be sure that Satan will find this out – and continues: “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not take forethought for the flesh to fulfil its lusts” (verse 14). Collectively, we need to be on our guard lest elements creep in unnoticed (Jude 4), bringing error and causing trouble.

2. **Weeds can look like desirable plants.** We have again this year sown seeds of chard (a vegetable similar to spinach) but we find the seedlings initially difficult to distinguish from a type of weed which, when small, has similar leaves. So as Christians we are warned against “the deceitfulness of sin” and are exhorted to have our “senses exercised for *distinguishing both good and evil*” (Hebrews 3:13 and 5:14). The criterion must be God’s word; Psalm 119:105 and Isaiah 8:20. The flesh can appear pleasant, as King Saul spared what he saw as “the best” and even “good” of what pertained to the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:9). The Spirit and the flesh “are opposed one to the other” (Galatians 5:17) and we must not allow anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). It is only by His power that we can “mortify the deeds of the body” and enjoy life according to God (Romans 8:13).
3. **When left, weeds can become established and difficult to remove.** One undesirable weed that flourishes in our garden is alkanet, which has little blue flowers rather like the forget-me-not but large ugly leaves and, more to the point, puts down deep roots rather like that of a parsnip. If allowed to establish itself it can be very difficult to remove, especially if its root has managed to reach under concrete or brick. Just as weeds must be dealt with *before they become established*, so Christians need to judge fleshly desires and habits before they get a grip of us; James 1:13-15. This may bring sorrow not only to ourselves but also to those with whom we have fellowship; Hebrews 12:15. “Keep thy heart with all diligence (*or, more than anything that is guarded*); for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23).
4. **A garden needs both sunshine and rain.** In the physical world God “makes His sun rise on evil and good, and sends rain on just and unjust” (Matthew 5:45). In springtime seeds

and saplings are slow to grow if the soil is still cold. And other gardeners have remarked on what I have also observed, that tap water does not seem to produce as good results as rain from heaven. As Christians we need to live in ***the light and warmth of the risen and glorified*** Christ; 2 Corinthians 4:6 and Ephesians 5:14. We must keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21) and this “is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). Then the ‘rain’ that we need to water our souls ***comes by the Holy Spirit***, who has come down from the glorified Christ in heaven (Acts 2:33). We are reliant on Him for our knowledge of the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:12) and to grow in them (Ephesians 3:16). It is He who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us (John 16:14). He is indeed “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:2).

5. **Plants may deteriorate or become stunted** if they are left too long in trays or small pots etc. before being planted out. A fortnight or more ago I transferred some baby lettuces from our cold frame to garden beds and they are looking quite sturdy. Others continued growing in the cold frame, crowded together, until I planted some of them out a few days ago; these remain lanky and limp and I doubt that they will come to much. As believers ***we need to “go on unto perfection (or, what belongs to full growth)”*** – Hebrews 6:1. Those to whom that was written had “become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food,” as was necessary to distinguish good and evil (Heb. 5:14), which we have considered in 2 above. The Corinthian believers too had to be reproved by Paul: “And I, brethren, have not been able to speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly; as to babes in Christ” and so on (1 Cor. 3:1 *et seq.*). God has prepared great things for us, “Things which eye has not seen, and ear not heard, and which have not come into man’s heart, which God has prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9). Let

us, like the apostle, reach out to the things which are before (Philippians 3:13). Let us not be stunted in our growth but be “growing by the true knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

6. **Different plants flourish in different environments**, according to soil, climate and exposure. As plants of our heavenly Father’s planting (Matthew 15:13), all believers are safely “in Christ” but our Father in His love and wisdom puts us in various circumstances in order to develop His work in us. We should be careful *not to take ourselves out of circumstances that He has designed for us*. The apostle Paul wrote, “I have learnt, in whatsoever state (*or circumstances*) I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). He also wrote: “Let each abide in that calling in which he has been called” (1 Corinthians 7:20). We can easily put ourselves in circumstances not conducive to our spiritual growth, or in which we are unnecessarily exposed to temptation. There is no record of failure with the apostle John when he was admitted to the high priest’s palace but Peter, having followed him there, denied His Lord (John 18:15-17; 25-27). “Lead us not into temptation” (Matthew 6:13).
7. **Plants are grown to fulfil different functions** – for food, for their beauty or scent, as a windbreak, for industrial purposes, etc. So as Christians we need to *accept cheerfully the various roles that God has intended for us*; see Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:14 *et seq.*; Ephesians 4:4-7 and 11-13. Let us not envy others in what the Lord has given them to do; Numbers 11:29. No doubt the different ways that God takes with each of us are to fit us for the roles in which He intends to use us.
8. **Plants, especially fruit trees, need to be pruned** skilfully from time to time, according to their species, to keep them in the right shape and to improve the crop. So our Lord in

John 15 tells us that His Father is the husbandman, purging (*pruning*) the branch that abides in Him (in Christ) “that it may bear more fruit” (verse 1). (Verse 6 tells us that those not abiding in Christ – I take that to be an allusion to unbelievers, though perhaps professors – would be cast out and burned.) As Christians, we know that our God and Father watches over His children:

*“A Holy Father’s constant care  
Keeps watch, with an unwearying eye,  
To see what fruits His children bear –  
Fruits that may suit their calling high.”*  
(J.N. Darby)

He uses various trials to this end. Though the experience may be irksome at the time, we can be sure that ***He disciplines us in love and wisdom***; see Hebrews 12:5-11.

9. **We maintain our gardens for the pleasure that we hope to derive from them.** Likewise, God – the God by Whom we have been so greatly blessed – ***desires to have pleasure from us, His children***; and what pleases Him but seeing the features of Christ reproduced in us? God opened heaven upon His Son when here on earth and declared, “Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). There is, of course, the sense in which God has pleasure in all His children (John 1:12), in that all are the result of the suffering, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; He sees us as in Him. But what Christ-likeness does the Father see in my behaviour, what I occupy myself with, what I say? When God “marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself” (Ephesians 1:5) it was “according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace” etc. May He find increasing pleasure in the ‘garden’ of my life and in the ‘garden’ of the local assembly (or church).

**10. Gardens and time off.** We probably all know how quickly a garden can change when we take time out for other things – holidays, convalescence, or other projects. Not only may flowers have passed their best or fruit become over-ripe but alien elements may have advanced rapidly. In our garden the wretched bindweed soon entwines itself around our griselinia, cornus and gooseberry bushes and ivy climbs up our fences, pushing its way between boards. At a previous property we admired our wisteria but it grew prolifically and would soon wrap itself around the eaves gutters. Likewise in our spiritual lives we may allow our eyes to be diverted by other things from “looking stedfastly on Jesus the Leader and Completer of faith” (Hebrews 12:20). These things may be legitimate in themselves – family, business, hobbies, etc. – but take up too much of our time, thoughts and energy. Worse, they may be that “sin which so easily entangles us” (Heb. 12:1). In the Old Testament we read of King David who “at the time that kings go forth to battle ... tarried still at Jerusalem ... and walked upon the roof of the king’s house” and saw a beautiful woman (2 Samuel 11:1, 2). The sequel was adultery, deceit and murder. Although he repented and his sin was put away, the governmental consequences of his actions followed (ch. 12, vv. 10-14). In the New Testament the Lord spoke of what happened “while men slept” (Matthew 13:25). In the world people speak of just ‘letting their hair down’ occasionally but it is just at these times that the enemy of our souls, who is ever watching us, will strike at us. *Let us keep our eyes always on the Lord* and be occupied in His service.

**11. Patience is needed while plants grow.** Several weeks back I sowed both runner and French beans and it seemed that they were never going to appear but they are at last peeping above the ground. “Behold the labourer awaits the precious fruit of the earth, having long patience for it, until it receive the early

and latter rain” (James 5:7). This is said in the context of our awaiting the return of the Lord. Let us not be like those of whom Peter writes, who cynically ask “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:4) but let us be ***eagerly watching and waiting*** for it, knowing that our toil (that done for Him) “is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). G.S.B.

*10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. The above article was written for our family but a brother suggested I include it in this magazine – Editor.*

### **Household Baptism**

The timing and manner of baptism by water has for centuries been, alas, a subject of dispute and division among Christians. John Bunyan (1628-88) has often been considered to have been a Baptist, but he decried the making of an issue of fellowship out of the mode of one’s baptism. Similarly, when brethren began to meet simply as such in the nineteenth century, different views on baptism were not seen as a hindrance to fellowship or service. Yet today this is still in some quarters such an issue. A paper has therefore been prepared, not to attack other views on baptism but briefly to review teaching and practice through the centuries and explaining why some of us adhere to household (not infant) baptism. Copies are available from the Editor.

### **POETIC PAGES**

#### **THE GOSPELS**

Holy writings of the Person of the blessed Son of God,  
Precious records of the pathway which the feet of Jesus trod;  
Treasured pages of His doings, rich reminder of His days,  
Skilful touches by the Spirit, of His ever perfect ways.

Scenes, whose rich delineations are the work of heaven’s art,  
Words, whose wonderful unfoldings meet the longings of the heart;  
Here we trace the Man of sorrows, here we see the Holy One  
On the earth amongst His creatures in the Person of the Son.

By the Galilean waters, in the busy city street,  
On the highways, in the deserts, or where congregations meet;  
In the house of Simon Peter, sitting wearied at the well,  
'Mid disciples on the hillside with the truth of God to tell.

Sharing Levi's entertainment with the outcast and the lost,  
Or asleep upon a pillow in the vessel, tempest tossed;  
Healing multitudes at sunset, praying through the night alone,  
As the Lord of Sabbath walking through the cornfields with His  
own.

Cleansing here the pleading leper, opening there the darkened eye,  
Of the beggar by the wayside – He a stranger passing by.  
Standing radiant on the mountain, meeting unbelief below,  
Bearing grief, sustaining sorrow, calming fear, dispelling woe.

Bowed in sorrow in the garden, standing silent in the hall,  
Crowned with thorns upon the pavement and rejected there by all;  
Cast away by men as worthless, He, Jehovah's Holy One,  
Walking meekly to Golgotha, there for sinners to atone.

Wrapped in linen with the spices, lying fragrant in the grave,  
Rising from the tomb triumphant and omnipotent to save;  
Stretching out to loved disciples hands of blessing and of grace,  
Carried upward into heaven, there to have the Victor's place.

Down the ages comes the impress of His Person and His ways;  
Not a myth of man's devising, but the theme of heaven's praise;  
Breathings of the Holy Spirit whom the Father hath sent forth  
Bringing blessed declarations of the Son's surpassing worth.

1936

H.J. Miles.

*Note: The following hymn, "Lift up your heads," was written by E.L. Bevir (1847-1922); the music was composed by 'C.L.,' probably Charles Leflaive.*

# The King of Glory

Words E. L. B.

Music by C. L.

i. Lift up your heads, e - ter - nal gates, A glow - ing dawn shines

o'er ye! At Sa - lem's door the Sov'-reign waits— He.....

is the King of glo - ry! Who is the King of

glo - ry? Who is the King of glo - ry? The great I

AM, the Lord of hosts— He is the King of glo - ry!

1. LIFT up your heads, eternal gates,  
A glowing dawn shines o'er ye;  
At Salem's door the Sov' reign waits,  
He is the King of glory.  
  
Who is the King of glory?  
Who is the King of glory?  
The great I AM, the Lord of Hosts,  
He is the King of glory.
2. The palms of yore their branches waved  
When Judah's sons were singing:  
"Hosanna! Zion shall be saved,"  
Their gentle Monarch bringing.  
Who is the King of glory? etc.
3. But the sun's light at mid-day died,  
And Judah's matrons, wailing,  
Lamented loud the Crucified,  
All trace of glory failing.  
Who is the King of glory? etc.
4. Those gloomy years have rolled away,  
The years of Israel's mourning;  
The rising sun with healing ray  
Proclaims the King's returning.  
Who is the King of glory? etc.
5. Lift up your heads, eternal gates,  
Transcendent dawn grows o'er ye!  
At Salem's door Messiah waits;  
He is the King of glory.  
Who is the King of glory?  
Who is the King of glory?  
"Tis Jesus wearing many a crown;  
He is King of glory!

**“The Redeemer shall come to Zion”**

O Zion, when Thy Saviour came  
In grace and love to thee,  
No beauty in thy Royal Lord  
Thy faithless eyes could see.

Yet onward in His path of grace  
The Holy Sufferer went,  
To feel at last that love on thee  
Had all in vain been spent.

Yet not in vain – o’er Israel’s land  
The glory yet will shine,  
And He, Thy once-rejected King,  
For ever shall be Thine.

The nations to thy glorious light,  
O Zion, yet shall throng,  
And all the listening islands wait  
To catch the joyful song.

The name of Jesus yet shall ring  
Through earth and heaven above,  
And all His ransomed people know  
The Sabbath of His love.

*Extracted from “Types, Psalms and Prophecies” by David Baron.*

**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.