

Words of Peace and Truth

No. 85: January – April 2012

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WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH
(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19)
NO. 85: JANUARY – APRIL 2012

Editorial

This is the first issue of the thicker magazine to be issued a little less frequently, as explained in the editorial to WPT No. 84. In 1 Corinthians 14:3 we read that oral ministry is given for “edification, for exhortation, and comfort” and I trust that the variety of written articles contained in this number does in some measure meet all these three objectives.

The piece which starts on the opposite page was written (perhaps 80 years ago) in a style which some readers today may find somewhat tedious in places. But its message is, I believe, of great importance, for it is essential to our moral and spiritual welfare that we understand the different ways in which the Lord Jesus is available to help us in our varying needs and circumstances. Let us remember that He not only died for us and is soon coming for us but, in the meantime, He *lives* for us and, as George Ware points out, we are to be “saved [*i.e. here and now*] in the power of His life” (Romans 5:10).

So, if some perseverance is needed in reading the article, I think it will be well rewarded. After all, the apostle Paul wrote some things “which are hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:16), but which are necessary; and his style would not suit current prevailing ideas – search for a break in Ephesians 1 between verses 3 and 14, or between verses 15 and 23! Yet that chapter presents the height and fulness of the purposes of God in a way that perhaps no other section of Scripture does. To Timothy he said, “Think of what I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things” (2 Tim. 2:7).
G.S.B.

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THE PRESENT SERVICE OF CHRIST.

IT is of special importance that the believer should be in the joyful experience of the present service which the Lord Jesus has undertaken in relation to us as His heavenly people on our wilderness journey.

What then is this present service of Christ for us? He is presented to us in Scripture as the Saviour, Priest, and Advocate of His people.

It must, however, be remembered, that the Lord Jesus is regarded as Priest in two very different connections. He is brought before us in Hebrews 4 and 5 as a Priest able to support His tried and suffering people while passing through their wilderness circumstances, but in Hebrews 8 we see Him as the priestly Minister of the sanctuary.

We may say that in character these offices are *twofold* but we shall seek to point out that in object they are *one*, for there is one great object underlying the whole of Christ's present service toward us. In other words, He will be Saviour, Priest, and Advocate to us in our wilderness path, not merely to enable us to pursue our way to the glory of God, but to so completely free us in spirit from every hindrance that He may be able to exercise toward us His highest priestly office as Minister of the sanctuary, leading our souls into the realization and enjoyment of God's presence. In glory we shall not need this service in its *twofold* character, for hindrance and wilderness pressure will then be for ever things of the past; but while we are in our present time state we cannot possibly dispense with any one of these offices to which our attention is directed.

It is evident that we have not yet reached that perfect state for which we have been "apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). In that way the believer may be regarded as in a transitional

condition. By his body he is still linked with the creation which, because of sin, travails and groans in pain, and he has a nature, formed of God, suitable to the condition of man on earth (he eats, drinks, and so forth). But he has also within him that which never came from the hand of God at all – an evil spring, the flesh (often somewhat incorrectly spoken of by us as “the old nature”) which is ever ready to respond to the attractions and principles of that terrible system – the world – in which man in his unregenerate condition finds his pleasure and spring of being, apart from God. While, however, all this is true on the one hand, there have on the other hand been formed in every believer, as the result of God’s gracious work by the Spirit in his soul, links with another order of things altogether outside this world – things which are already established in Christ, and which constitute that other heavenly world which God will eventually bring about to the joy of His own heart. How our souls delight to contemplate that order of things outside of nature, into which flesh shall never enter, where love divine dwells, where Christ is everything, and God “all in all”!

“The new creation’s stainless joy
 Glams through the present gloom,
 That world of bliss without alloy—
 The saints’ eternal home!”

This transitional state was under the Spirit’s eye when He wrote those words by the pen of the apostle, in 2 Cor. 4:16, “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” When the Holy Ghost speaks of the “outward man,” it is not exactly the body that is referred to, but rather all that in the believer whereby he is in touch with the scene of creation around him in this world; whereas the “inward man” is that which is linked with the heavenly system of things of which we have spoken. We see, moreover, from this passage (as indeed also from many others) that it is in the Lord’s mind that, while we are in this

transitional state, the believer should be delivered from the power of things, which, through the “outward man,” would fetter his soul, and that he should be brought, through the daily renewing of the “inward man,” into more living contact with that heavenly order of things for which he has been apprehended of God, and which, after all, can alone satisfy the new affections of his soul. The dealings of God are seen to be to that end, but these ways of God with us are the necessary consequence of the thoughts of His heart about us – thoughts which have, moreover, found their expression in committing to the blessed Lord Jesus the various offices of which we propose to speak, resulting as they do, in the renewing and strengthening of the “inward man” in the believer. Can you say, reader, with an “honest and true heart,” that your earnest desire is that this “inward man” should, day by day, be renewed in you? Is it going too far to say that the greatest hindrance to our answering to the present desires of the Lord’s love about us, is the lack of that “purpose of heart” which leads us to appreciate all that He is towards us, because we find that without Him we can do nothing in presence of all the terrible forces of evil arrayed against us?

Now it is of great moment to remember that *in its place*, nature (God’s own formation in us as His creatures) is owned of Him. That there is at times a special call from God to walk outside its claims, as in the case of the Apostle Paul, is freely admitted; but this is a question of God’s sovereignty, and only confirms what we have stated as to its being owned of Him. While, however, this is true, we do well to ask ourselves how far the spirit of Nazariteship [*see Numbers 6 – Ed.*] possesses us – a spirit which would lead us to refuse natural joys and gratifications in order that we may be here more wholly for God. The time of the Bridegroom’s absence is a time when fasting becomes the children of the bride-chamber. Let it be remembered too that, sin being in the flesh, all that which is of God’s order in nature has

been corrupted through Satan's influence, and the natural relationships ordained of God can only be taken up according to His pleasure through the believer being placed, as to the inward man, in connection with a new order of things, and as being "of the household of God" and no longer "of the world."

When, however, we consider the evil spring of which we have spoken – the flesh – we are on wholly different ground, for it has been absolutely refused and condemned of God in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and only exists in the believer as an utterly condemned evil principle, the gratification of which is disastrous to spiritual vigour. Thank God there is such a thing as freedom from it by "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Now the flesh is in close alliance with the world. Indeed we may safely say that if there were no sinful flesh, there would be no evil system called the world, for the world system has been built up by Satan in hostility to God, and for the gratification of those that are in the flesh.

No believer has gone far in his spiritual history before he is face to face with the difficulty of discerning these things in their true light (Heb. 4:12). He has to judge between flesh and spirit, and between the world of self-will and lust and the new order of things to which Christ's death has introduced him, and to regard himself as having his place in "the household of God," so that he may escape the snares set by Satan for his entanglement, and pass on his way to the glory and good pleasure of God.

Now it is in view of all this which we have been considering, that the Lord Jesus has taken up in connection with the new order of things, established by His death and resurrection, the various offices of which we speak. Alas! it is not every believer (using the term in its largest sense, as including all who have been the subjects of renewing grace) who experiences the benefit of these offices. It is only too sadly and solemnly the case that there are

many believers who pass through this present time state within closed doors as regards Christ (Rev. 3:20). How they got into that state after the first flush of their new-found joy had subsided, we do not now enquire. The enemy laid his snare, worked out his plan, and Laodicean lukewarmness took the place of affection for Christ. Such have no enjoyment of Christ's present service towards His own. They need to be aroused from their slumbers, or silenced from their unseemly mirth, that they may hear their Master's loving call to open the door, that He may come in to them and sup with them, and then give them to know the still deeper joy of their supping with Him.

Let not the reader, however, suppose for one moment that because the believer has lost his enjoyment of this service that it is therefore altogether suspended. The tender grace which the Lord Jesus showed in connection with Peter's terrible fall precludes such a thought. How our heart's affections for Him are touched as we consider the grace which caused Him to turn and look upon Peter as the final words of denial fell from his lips. The cruel mockings of the religious rabble around Him did not cause Him for one moment to forget that loved disciple, whose deplorable self-confidence led him into such depths of sin. It was the Lord's prayer that sustained the faith of the erring one, and His look that led him to repentance and prepared him for all that further gracious dealing so touchingly described to us in John 20 and 21, which led to his complete restoration.

But, perhaps, someone may ask, what is meant by "opening the door to Christ"? Shall we ask in return, what is meant by shutting it? Just simply this, that Christ is shut out of the circle of my affairs. He is not habitually referred to or consulted, and I make my plans without taking His claims or authority into account. I act as if I had no Lord or Master who, as Son over God's household, has a right (the right of love) to a voice in my arrangements. To "open the door" is to take just the very opposite

course. It is in effect to say, Lord Jesus, Thou hast by Thy love won my heart for Thyself, and I willingly yield Thee Thine own rightful place. As the little hymn so sweetly puts it –

“I love to own, Lord Jesus,
Thy claims o’er me divine;
Bought with Thy blood most precious,
Whose can I be but Thine?”

The soul that can say that, has opened the door, and such an one will not only richly prove all that Christ is for His own in their wilderness circumstances, but also be led by Him into the present enjoyment of His own heavenly order of things outside these circumstances altogether. As one has said “He will sympathize with me in my things and lead me into the communion of His things.”

This service is His delight, for the presence of God the Father now fully revealed and made known in all the deep counsels of eternal love in connection with Himself, is the sanctuary or holy place of which He is Minister. In that circle He not only *presents* us, but *sustains and instructs* us, causing our souls to respond to these revelations of God, and deepening our apprehensions of the love which marked us out before the world was, for association with Himself. In this way He capacitates us for the highest service of the sanctuary, calling forth from our hearts the worship which He declared long since the Father was seeking from those who would render it to Him “in spirit and in truth.”

With these thoughts before us we may now consider in a little fuller detail the present service of our Lord Jesus Christ towards us as “His own which are in the world.”

First of all then – as being liable to fall under the power of worldly influences through the flesh, I need a Saviour, and I have such an one in Christ. He presents Himself to me as the One who is able “to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him”

(Heb. 7:25). The expression “to the uttermost” is said to be a very strong one, and that it not only takes into account the end of the journey, but every danger and pitfall by the way. The whole pathway of the believer is contemplated right on to the end, and there is seen to be no conceivable circumstance in which he can be beyond the reach of this blessed One who has undertaken his case. Let it be carefully observed that we are not now speaking of salvation as it is presented to the unsaved sinner. We take it for granted that the reader is settled in his soul as to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins (Luke 1:77).

To that aspect of salvation we do not now allude, nor do we refer to the salvation which we shall obtain (1 Thess. 5:9) when our long looked-for Saviour shall come and change our bodies of humiliation, and give them a fashion like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:20-21).

It is the *present everyday service* of the Saviour that we are now considering. “What a Saviour Jesus is!” we may well say. He not only puts our feet on “the way of salvation,” but He lives to maintain us in it – we are “saved by his life” (Rom. 5:10). Let us notice, too, how beautifully present soul salvation is brought before us in Phil. 2:12, “Wherefore, my beloved . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” The Holy Ghost, by the apostle, first spreads out before us the pathway of our precious Saviour here on earth, uncovering to our souls the blessed moral springs of His life here as a Man among men. He shows us, as it were, the motive springs of a life for the good pleasure and will of God, and then (mark that word “Wherefore,”) we are exhorted to “work out” our “own salvation,” God having worked in us the willingness to do His good pleasure by leading our souls to appreciate the Lord Jesus in His pathway here.

Someone may ask, How am I to work out my own salvation? I think the answer is that as we now turn to the Saviour with true purpose of heart, He delivers our souls from every motive which found no place with Him.

We have a somewhat similar thought presented to us in 1 Peter 1:8-9, where the Lord Jesus is brought before us as the One whom, having not seen, we love, in order that being through faith under the power of His love, we may, while on the journey, receive “the end (or object) of our faith” and be in the present joy of “soul salvation,” knowing too that nothing else could satisfy His love than that we should be completely delivered from the state of things in which we are apart from Him, the loved Object of our souls. As we apprehend this wonderful design of love we are more and more drawn away from this world and its principles to Himself and to that other world where He is, where salvation will be fully realised; and we are thus delivered from the power of present things “which are seen and temporal” (2 Cor. 4:18). Whether, therefore, we contemplate Him as He was or as He is, we are saved from the influences of the world. Again, I ask, do we desire this with an honest and true heart? But *why* is He Saviour to me *in this way*? I shall get to heaven at the end; His death has secured that for me. Do you say, it is in order that we may be continually able to enjoy His love, and thus be happy in our path until we see His blessed face? Well, that is true; but may we not say that the greatest object of all is that being maintained by Him in accord with His death, we may be free to draw near into the sanctuary of which He is Minister (*Heb.* 8:2), there to listen to Him and be led on by Him to worship the Father?

Again – I may have a weak body and be compassed with infirmity of one sort and another; or I may have to pass through moments of deep anxiety caused by the presence of sickness with those dearest to me. We all know something of this – seasons when the soul almost sinks as we cry to God to come in with

healing power; but things seem to go from bad to worse until at last death seems to be on the threshold, or may even strike and take some loved one from us. Or, circumstances may appear to go against us, the tangle grows worse every day, until we can see no way to unravel it, and the spirit is sore pressed within us. We cry to God, but no way out presents itself, and we are, as it were, shut up in our difficulties.

In these circumstances of trial and pressure are we left alone? Are we left to struggle on with a heavily bowed down spirit in the best way we can, until the Saviour shall show His power and come in for our deliverance? Oh, no – what we need is one who can sustain and succour us *in* the season of pressure, while awaiting the moment of deliverance. This is the service of a priest, and the Lord Jesus – blessed be His name! – has undertaken that office also on our account (Heb. 4:15). Why? For our happiness and comfort? Surely, but again is it not that with a spirit set free from every burden in consequence of the succour ministered by Him, we may be free to enter into the sanctuary as worshippers, though every circumstance of trial and pressure remain unaltered? What a wonderful advance this is on the experience of David, as recorded for us in Psa. 3. He could lie down in the midst of his unaltered circumstances of trial, and sleep, and awake as sustained of the Lord, but we are enabled to rise in spirit out of them altogether, and pour out our worship and praise in the sanctuary.

There is another way in which we may happily contemplate the service of the Lord Jesus as Priest. I refer to the moment of temptation. The Lord Jesus has “suffered being tempted,” and “He is able to succour them that are tempted.” *As Priest*, He cannot have to say to us if we yield to the temptation, but while we refuse it in the spirit of obedience to God and His word, the Lord Jesus can and will succour us, so that the effort of Satan to draw us away from the path of obedience may be utterly foiled.

In all these various circumstances our souls make this great gain, that He, whom we have learned to know something of as Saviour, now gives us to prove what He is to us as Priest.

Again – I may, alas! through lack of dependence and failure to maintain a spirit of obedience, miss the succour of the Lord Jesus as Priest and fall into sin. For the time being my communion is broken, and I need an advocate for the restoring of my soul. The Lord Jesus has undertaken that service also. Through His advocacy, the root of my sin being discovered to me, I am led to repentance and self-judgment – my sin is confessed, and I am forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. Thus is my soul restored, and I am again brought to the joy of communion for the same reason (chief among others) that I may not be debarred from drawing near as a worshipper in the sanctuary.

Once more – I have to take up duties in the world, to go to its markets and what not; I have to transact business with worldly people, otherwise as the apostle says: “We must needs go out of the world” (1 Cor. 5:10). I have to hear much that my soul revolts against, unseemly mirth and many things, which I cannot possibly avoid in my passage through this world – I hate it all. I refuse it all; I long to be apart from it all. I am even content to suffer in order to escape it as much as possible, but it *cannot be wholly avoided*. It is something like a man who, taking a long journey over dusty roads to visit some friend at a distance, arrives at his friend’s house covered with dust. He could not help it; it was absolutely unavoidable, for he was obliged to go, but will he or his friend be content that he should *remain like that*? Certainly not. The very first office of true friendship would be to set him at ease, by removing the dust contracted on his journey. We are not now speaking of worldly principles and present things from which I need *salvation*, nor of infirmity in which I need a *Priest*, nor of sin in connection with which I need an *Advocate*, but of that *unavoidable soil* which comes on the spirit by reason of my being

in a scene where sin is – the whole region of man’s self-will and self-seeking.

It was this that was in the mind of the Lord Jesus when He performed that touching service of washing His disciples’ feet on the last night of His sojourn with them here below (John 13). It was as if He said to them: ‘It does not suit the love of My heart for you, to have you at My table (part with Me) with unrefreshed, travel-stained feet.’ The deep moral significance of that service must ever be inestimably precious to us. Our pilgrim feet grow weary and contract defilement in this sin-stained world, and we need the refreshment as well as the cleansing of foot-washing before we can undistractedly enjoy our part with Christ. The Lord Jesus will see to it that this service of love is effectually performed towards me as one of His own. That is to say, He will not only have the unavoidable soil of the world removed from my soul by the ministry of His word, but He will also have me thereby so refreshed in spirit that I may be able to enjoy my part with Him. But what is this part with Him of which Jesus speaks? Is it not all that into which as Man He has entered before the Father’s face? And how can I rightly learn what that is except as I am drawn in spirit into the sanctuary of His Father’s presence? Thus also this ministry of the Lord Jesus not only maintains me in a true pilgrim spirit here below, but draws me into the sanctuary there to take my place as a listener to His voice, and as a worshipper of the Father.

Now, unless we in some measure enter into and respond to these wonderful designs of God’s love to draw us into the sacred enclosure of His own presence, we are great losers, and the Lord Jesus misses our company. Let us ask ourselves as before Him, how far have we apprehended Him in His character as Minister of the sanctuary? Nay, let us go down even deeper still and ask ourselves, have we ever felt our need of Him in this way? We all, surely, deplore our feebleness for worship. Do we not now stand

at the threshold of the discovery of the real reason of this? If I do not know Him in *my* circumstances, as He comes to sup *with me*, how can I pass over under the blessed hand of the Spirit (like Rebecca with Eleazer of old) to know Him in *His own*? But how blessed, and what a comfort to the soul, when, feeling the immensity of what it is to sit before the Lord and to worship in the holy place, I make the glorious discovery that Christ is there, to strengthen and to sustain me. We get a picture of this in some sort in Daniel 10, where we have an account of the way in which the prophet, when he was in the divine presence, deeply conscious of his own weakness (see verses 8 and 9), was strengthened and capacitated step by step to receive communications from God, until he could at last say (verse 19): “Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.”

There are two other important consequences of entrance into the sanctuary. One is that I receive there the knowledge of God’s way – “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary” (Psa. 77:13) – and the other is that I get there true understanding of the moral value of things (Ps. 73:17) by weighing them in the balances of that holy place. The result is that I come out to my path here able to pursue my course in some measure of intelligence as to the mind of God, and there is that about me which corresponds to the shining of the skin of Moses’ face when he came from the presence of God.

Now, one word as to the effect of all this on our assemblings together as God’s people. It will be evident to the most casual reader that that of which we have been speaking is not merely a question of going to meetings of the Lord’s people convened for the purpose of breaking of bread and worship. I may go (have we not all done so many times?) and never enter the sanctuary of God’s holy presence at all. We have not been under the hands of the “Minister of the sanctuary.” Our souls were, perhaps, under the influence of worldly present things, or burdened by the pressure of infirmity or circumstances, or alas! perhaps even

soiled with sin, or we were with our feet unwashed, and, as being thus, we could not and did not know the joys of the sanctuary. We were present in the meeting, but not in the sanctuary of the Lord's presence; we were in the company of the Lord's people, but not in the company of the worshippers before the Father. It is sad to have to own it, but it is true, is it not? But how blessed to come to our assemblings together in the great spiritual gain of the Lord's present service to us! Thus we should be so free in spirit that He would be able to carry out His ministry to the full and lead our souls into the blissful calm of His presence. Then every voice being hushed in the soul we should be so engaged with Himself in all His blessedness, and with the Father in the fulness of His eternal love, that our hearts would overflow with thanksgiving, praise and worship.

“There only to adore,
My soul its strength may find,
Its life, its joy, for evermore,
By sight nor sense defined!”

This is the very highest point to which He can conduct our souls at the present time. It is the anticipation of heaven itself. What a holy privilege! and what unbounded grace on His part to take upon Himself the office for which none but He is qualified – “Minister of the sanctuary” (*Hebrews 8:2*).

May we each, beloved reader, be found until He comes with an open door for Him, proving more and more all that He is to us, not only on our side, but also on His own, for His name's sake.

By George W. Ware (for whom I do not have exact dates, but he was taken to be with His Lord some time between 1932 and 1937 – Editor).

THINGS THAT ARE SHAKEN

Haggai 2:1-9; 20-23; Hebrews 12:25-29

I wish to speak about things that are shaken, two references in Haggai and one in Hebrews quoting the prophet; each refers to something slightly different. We live in days when things are being shaken, and I would like to give this word on the lines of encouragement, dear brethren.

Every day we see in the news the evidences of things being shaken financially. We get warnings, severe warnings, even from the Governor of the Bank of England, as to the future. It is quite clear that those who govern have no idea what the outcome may be, but they fear the worst, financial chaos and instability. The reason why there is financial instability is the enormous debts run up by countries with no prospect of full repayment. Even this country is having to retrench now to try and get public finances on a sound footing. But underneath that is the moral question: how did all this arise? What went wrong? The underlying moral foundations have been shaken and are giving way. We saw it in the riots in August; we see it in the breakdown of family relationships ordered of God, the rise of alcoholism and drug addiction, corruption in the media and even in high places. People have got no moral foundation because they have given up Christianity, they have turned away from God and His word and the result is the state of things we see today.

I believe it was in circumstances of this sort that Haggai prophesied. He prophesied in days when the kingdom of Judah had been shaken and carried away captive; their city and temple had been destroyed; but after many years a small remnant had returned. They had laid the foundations of the temple, then opposition had arisen and the work had stopped for about ten years. Then Haggai and Zechariah prophesied to them to recommence the work and to strengthen their hands.

So the first prophecy we read in Haggai 2, verse 2, is to Zerubbabel, to Joshua the high priest and to the remnant of the people saying, “Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory?” There would still be some, old men and women, who remembered Solomon’s temple in all its glory before it was destroyed by the Babylonians. Those of us who are elderly can look back to days which were very different from the present; days in which this hall and others would have been full on the Lord’s Day. “Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? And how do ye see it now? Is it not as nothing in your eyes?” Now we are a little company of the Lord’s people, struggling along. This is what the attitude was then, but the prophet says “be strong, Zerubbabel, and ... Joshua, son of Jehozadak and ... all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah, and work: for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts.” We may not see very much in our day, but God is still working; He does not give up. God says, “I am with you.” “The word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and My Spirit, remain among you: fear ye not.” We have God’s word and we have His Spirit; they will remain until the Lord comes. “For” – this is what God says – “yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations.” What a comprehensive shaking it will be – far worse than anything envisaged now, I believe. We have only to read Revelation to see what a shaking there will be on every hand in this world. “And the desire of all nations shall come.” Is not that extraordinary? When it speaks of His coming in Revelation it says that all the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him, but here is One described as the desire of all nations. In spite of what is going on in this world there is a desire underneath for someone who will put everything right. Alas, there will be one who comes in his own name and the Lord said “him ye will receive” (John 5:43). We wait for the day when the One comes of whom it is

said, “blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39).

So “the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts.” The silver is His, the gold is His. “And the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former ... and in this place will I give peace.” Notice the number of times the words “saith Jehovah of hosts” are repeated. Six times the prophet repeats “saith Jehovah of hosts.” God has said it and God will bring it to pass. And all that God has purposed and designed will come to pass without fail.

Then we have the word coming a second time. And this time it is to Zerubbabel only – “Zerubbabel, governor of Judah.” Zerubbabel had to put up with a lot of opposition. The bulk of the people who had been carried away captive did not come back with him. There were very few Levites, very few who were willing to put their hands to the work. But God had a word of encouragement for him. “I will shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations.” This is *political* shaking here. Do you see the difference from the beginning of the chapter? There it was shaking the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, but here it is political: “I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride therein; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.” What a day that will be of political shaking and confusion! But “in that day,” says the prophet, “in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, ...” There are not many people in the Bible addressed as “My servant” by God. There are some surprising ones: in Jeremiah you will find, “Nebuchadnezzar my servant” (Jer. 27:6). But Zerubbabel is one and God says, “I will make thee as a signet.” What is a signet? It’s a ring with a seal and in the olden days the king would use it as a mark of his

authority. You may remember that, in the Book of Esther, when decrees were made by Ahasuerus they were sealed with the king's ring (Esther 3:12). So God says, 'You will have My authority.' "I will make thee as a signet." The Lord, when He spoke, spoke as one with authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:29). That authority came from God. Zerubbabel is a type, I believe, of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come with God's authority to deal with everything in this world. We look forward to that, beyond the shaking, to His appearing publicly.

When we turn to Hebrews we have a different setting. I would have liked, if there had been time, to read of the things we have come to, as they are the things that are *not* to be shaken. "Ye have come to mount Zion" and so on. The writer to the Hebrews started his epistle by drawing attention to God who has spoken to us in the Person of the Son. How awful to refuse to listen! But that was what some of the Jewish believers, or rather professors, were doing in turning back to Judaism. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaks," says the writer, "for if those did not escape who refused him who had uttered the oracles on earth, much more we who turn away from Him who does so from heaven." I think the one who uttered the oracles on earth was the angel through whom the covenant was given (Heb. 2:2). The law was given through Moses, but now we have a heavenly speaking: "whose voice then shook the earth" (that was Sinai) "but now He has promised, saying, Yet once will I shake not only the earth but also the heaven" and of course he is quoting the passage we have read in Haggai. This is the final shaking. "But this Yet once, signifies the removal of what is shaken, as being made, that what is not shaken may remain." The whole world system, the present evil world, is going to be removed and God's kingdom will appear. "Wherefore let us, receiving a kingdom not to be shaken, have grace, by which let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear." There is a kingdom: "Fear not, little flock," said the Lord,

“it has been the good pleasure of your Father to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). What comfort there was in those words for the disciples, the little flock who would receive the kingdom the Father had promised them. When our Lord Jesus comes, God’s kingdom will be set up on earth and His kingdom will not be shaken. Like the stone that fell upon Nebuchadnezzar’s image and became a great mountain; all the gold and the silver and the brass, the iron and the clay will be swept away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the great mountain will fill the earth (Dan. 2:34-36). We wait that happening; we do not know *when* it will happen but we know it *will* happen, and it will happen soon. But in the meantime the writer says, “Let us serve God acceptably with reverence and fear. For also our God is a consuming fire.” May the Lord encourage us, for His name’s sake.

Word given by Tony Sheldrake at a meeting for open ministry in Croydon, 4th December 2011.

HOLINESS AND LOVE

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” – 2 Corinthians 7:1.

As we are increasingly distressed by the depravity of the world around us, appalled by the tolerance of similar evil principles within what is publicly called ‘the Church,’ and humbled by the things that have adversely affected our own hearts and lives, surely we become more aware of the need for a holiness that suits the God who has called us into relationship with Himself and who says, “Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

Many years ago, when reading the ministry of F.E. Raven, I came across a comment to the effect that holiness comes by love.

I didn't understand it but – perhaps because I was somewhat surprised by it – it remained with me.

More recently, I was reading again through the First Epistle to the Thessalonians and was impressed by the following verses at the end of chapter 3 (Darby Translation):

“But you may the Lord make to exceed and abound in love toward one another, and toward all, even as we also towards you, in order to the confirming of your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”

I think I had previously missed the plain connection here between love and holiness: the apostle desired that the love of the Thessalonian believers might abound *with a view to* their hearts being confirmed (“stablished” in the KJV) unblamable in holiness in a coming day. Considering this brought the remark of Mr. Raven’s back to mind. This, more fully, is what he said:

“We have to accept the obligation to holiness, because God is holy, and the obligation to love one another, because God loves us (1 John 3:16; 4:11). ‘Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.’ In the passage before us [2 Cor. 6:14, 18; 7:1] we have first the obligation to separation, and then we find that holiness follows on separation. It is love which leads, I judge, to holiness; it is not faith. I do not admit the doctrine of ‘holiness by faith.’ I believe it arises from a confusion in people’s minds between righteousness and holiness. Righteousness is by faith, because it is God’s righteousness; holiness is by love. There is no real antidote to lust, except love. The Spirit is against the flesh; love is against lust. If we were loving God and Christians and all men, as we are charged to do, there would be no room in our hearts for lust. It is only as we are walking in love that we

shall be ‘perfecting holiness in the fear of God,’ for love then governs the heart.”

We should note again the distinction between righteousness and holiness, on which we touched in WPT 81 (pp. 13-15). Righteousness is a judicial estimate of my responsibilities to, and dealings with, others. Am I acting rightly in the relationships in which I stand to others (firstly, of course, towards God) and properly discharging all the obligations which flow from them? “Holiness, on the other hand, is the abhorrence, in the nature, of what is evil, and delight in what is good and pure, and, when we speak of men, God having His own full place in our hearts; as in God it is His separation from all evil, and abhorrence of it. One is connected with judicial title, the other with the delights of the nature” (J.N. Darby).

As to righteousness, outside of Christ we have none, but on the basis of the work of Christ on the cross, God has provided a righteousness which is reckoned to the believer in Jesus – “the righteousness which is of God through faith” (Philippians 3:9). This is explained to us in Romans 3 and 4.

But we do not read of *holiness* being reckoned (or “imputed” – KJV) to us by faith. True, there is a sense in which all believers are sanctified, or set apart, by the blood of Christ which covers them (Hebrews 13:12). The children of Israel were separated to God by the sprinkling of blood (Exodus 24:8); this is no doubt what is referred to by the New Testament writers in Hebrews 9:19 and 1 Peter 1:2. Even the children of a believing parent, without reference to their own personal standing or state, are regarded as holy in the sense of being *positionally* set apart (see 1 Corinthians 7:14).

In this article, however, we are more concerned with how we become *practically* holy. To revert to the passage already quoted on page 21 from 1 Thessalonians 3, I was also interested to know

what C.A. Coates said in his “Outline of First Thessalonians.”
This is what I found:

“Love is the way of holiness. Paul speaks of their exceeding and abounding ‘in love toward one another ... in order to the confirming of your hearts unblamable in holiness ... at the coming of our Lord Jesus.’ The abounding of love is the way to it, so holiness is a moral continuation; it is not that the coming of the Lord brings in new elements. Christians like to think of being in glory as the fruit of redemption and divine grace and love, as though there were no preparation on their part, but God’s idea is to have a people morally suited for translation, so that it is in accord with all God’s principles to take them. Translation was the appropriate termination of such a course as Enoch’s; he was converted at the age of sixty-five, and walked with God for three hundred years. What could God do with such a man? He could not let him go into death; He took him. Enoch was in communion with God’s heavenly thoughts, as Noah was with His earthly thoughts. Both Enoch and Noah walked with God. So here, if there is a people exceeding and abounding in love toward one another, it is not a very wonderful thing if they go into heaven without dying, and come out of heaven with the Lord. The Christian circle is a little bit of heaven let down into this world; people are kind and benevolent and do many things for each other, but there is nothing like divine love. How much we need to pray, “The Lord make [you] to exceed and abound in love toward one another” (v. 12). It is the Lord alone who can do it; He can originate and maintain this divine flow of affection. There is something exquisitely sensitive in divine love, and that is why it promotes holiness. Legality feels a spot because it is a reproach on *me*, but love feels it because it is a reproach on those Christ loves, and on Christ. Nothing is so sanctifying

as love, so you get a wonderful standard of holiness if love is in activity; it is the divine nature, God's love is a holy love. ...

Love is repellent of all evil; nothing is so repellent of evil as that intense yearning for the good of another. ... The principle of lust is something for *self*, but the principle of love is the good of another. If we are in the activity of love, every kind of unholy movement is put in the place of death. It is lovely to think of saints unblamable in holiness."

The love which "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which has been given to us" (Romans 5:5), and which is to circulate among us as brothers and sisters in Christ, is the holy love of a holy God. So growth in holiness is a matter of our communion with – dare we say, our enjoyment of? – God. To use again the words of J.N. Darby –

"This, then, is practically what holiness is – the soul in the new man in the light as God is, enjoying His purity (enabled to do it through the blood of Christ), and that in grace, having fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and the more we take it in this simple manner, the more really and practically shall we know what it is. If we are holy, we shall know what holiness is, only it will be enjoyed in its fulness and perfectness in God Himself, and so directly connected with love, for God is love; His other essential name is light, and in that we walk, being light in the Lord, and there enjoy (as we are formed by) love. We have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Christ – and what brought us there? Infinite love – and what do we find there? Infinite love – and in Christ, nothing in us inconsistent with it; and, walking with God, nothing in our minds or consciences. 'We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have received the reconciliation' (Romans 5:11). For this we must have life, divine life, to know and enjoy it, and by the power

of the Holy Ghost be separate, through the eye being fixed on Christ, from evil to good. The simpler we apprehend this, the better, if we would know what holiness is. It is separation, in living communion, to God who is holy.”

Let us, therefore, see holiness not so much as a negative thing but in its positive aspect. While it does plainly involve the abhorrence of evil, and practical separation from it, it is essentially related to our communion with the God who has so richly blessed us in Christ, and to our enjoyment of His holy love. May this stimulate us more vigorously to “pursue peace with all, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

The Editor.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

What I first wanted to lay down as a principle, is this: the greatest blessing God has conferred upon us is the knowledge of divine Persons. It is the greatest blessing God could confer upon a creature; no other blessing can come up to it. I do not think anyone can contest that for an instant. If I think of what our future is to be, we come into an inheritance; but whatever we come into in that way is below us. Naturally it is so. Suppose I was heir to a great estate now in my father’s possession, and constantly heard it said all this was to be mine; I should say, I have a greater privilege than that, I have the privilege of knowing my father. If things were not altogether out of course in the world, people would think so. They would consider the privilege of intimacy with one’s father greater than any advantage one could come into by being the son of his father. When I look at divine things, I see there is no blessing God could confer upon a creature to be compared to the knowledge of Himself in the blessedness of His own nature

and His own thoughts; for that is what is involved in the knowledge of God. Poor sinful creatures that we are, we are called to heavenly blessing, to the knowledge of God Himself as He has been pleased to reveal Himself in His blessed Son.

Extracted from an address given by F.E. Raven at Quemerford, Wiltshire, in July, 1889, on "The Knowledge of the Father and the Son;" reproduced at the request of a reader who felt quickened in his soul by reading it.

THE WATERS OF MARAH

We have the same great principle, in type, at the waters of Marah (*Exodus 15:23-25*). The people knew the value of the blood of the lamb in Egypt, as their safeguard from judgment, and their complete redemption in virtue of that blood. And now the Lord would have them further to know, in their own experience, the unfailing power of the blood for all the vicissitudes of the wilderness. In this way they had to do with death in all their journeyings. They were marching through the wilderness, under the shelter of the blood – the expressive symbol of death. It was on this ground alone that Jehovah could say to Balaam, "I have not seen iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel." He does not say, "There is none there," but "I have not seen it." True, it was all in type, but we can easily see what was always uppermost in the Lord's mind, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." As if the Lord had said, 'When I see the blood of the lamb, I see that which glorified me – blotted out sin – destroyed the power of the enemy, and obtained eternal redemption for my beloved people.' It left Jehovah free, in all circumstances, to act in pure grace towards the people. They had only to LOOK UP, however naughty they had been, or however sorely they were distressed, and grace flowed – the need was met – the bitter cup was sweetened, and they were freely forgiven.

The blood of the lamb was their divine passport from Egypt to Canaan. Nothing could stand before it; everything yields to its power. If the hosts of Egypt attempt to stop the journeyings of the blood-sprinkled people, they are cast into the depths of the sea; and if all the nations of the earth had sided with them, they must have shared the same fate. "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee" (Isaiah 43:3). The deep waters of the Red Sea must make a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over; not an hoof was left hind. The manna, the cloud and the living stream from the flinty rock are supplied, all enemies are subdued, and every need is met in virtue of the same precious blood. And though the river of death, at end of their journeyings, overflowed all banks, and Jericho walled to heaven, as the threatening rage of the enemy, and the tokens of his power, they present no barrier to the infinite power of the blood. But where is its power not felt and owned, willingly or unwillingly? It rent the veil of heaven, and unlocked the portals of the grave. What is higher than heaven? What is deeper than hell? (Matt. 27: 50-53).

But we are all prone to forget, like Israel old, what the Lord had done for us – what bitter cup He drank for us – and that we carry through the wilderness with us the same "token" of His unchanging love. Hence, we often need to get a taste of the bitter in order to remind us of that which alone can sweeten; and that all the difficulties, trials and temptations of this life are to be borne in fellowship with Him. This His love desires. He has gone through them all *for* us, and that with infinite patience, meekness and wisdom, as an example *to* us. And, oh! wondrous grace, He allows to us in our afflictions a ministry of love, sympathy and kindness, which He allowed not Himself. He was forsaken of God in His sore distress – He was surrounded by the violence and rage of His shameless enemies, who gaped upon Him with their mouths like ravening and roaring lions. All refuge failed Him; comforters there were none (Psa. 22:1-21).

This was for us; there He drank the bitter cup of God's wrath against sin. And He *will* have us to know Him there in love for us. And we have to learn by experience, however painful the lesson, that nothing but the bitter cup of Calvary can sweeten the bitter cup of Marah. In other words, the sympathies of His heart who died there, are alone sufficient to soothe the sorrows of ours. But glory be to God, who gave His Son, we find all in Jesus. His cross is ours – His heart is ours. The full value of the cross is ours; the tender, boundless sympathies of His heart are ours – ours now – ours for ever. Oh! Wonderful, precious, blessed truth! What more do we need? The cross and heart of Jesus – ours. Eternal springs of all blessing! The blest though bitter waters of Marah lead to a deeper knowledge of Calvary; and the deep and painful need of a broken heart, to deeper fellowship with His. He could say, and in truth, as none else ever could, "Reproach hath broken my heart." Yes, and more, in place of the tender sympathies of fellow-pilgrims which His people so abundantly enjoy, He had to add – "And I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none" (Psa. 69). Oh! what a refuge we have in the once broken and desolate heart of Jesus!

"Jesus, my all in all Thou art,
My rest in toil, my ease in pain;
The medicine of my broken heart;
'Mid storms, my peace; in loss, my gain:
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown;
In shame, my glory and my crown.

"In want, my plentiful supply;
In weakness, my almighty power;
In bonds, my perfect liberty;
My refuge in temptation's hour;
My comfort 'midst all grief and thrall,
My life in death, my All in all."

When the Lord has thus brought us down to a true sense of our own weakness, and to more real dependence on His unfailing strength and constant care, the purposes of His tender love are answered. The deeper the trial, the stronger the expression of His love. And now we can say, in the rich experience of our souls, "He restoreth my soul." Not the green pastures and the still waters, pleasant and excellent as these are – no; but the Lord Himself. The path becomes more and more individualised; there must be greater nearness to the Lord as our Shepherd, and more direct fellowship with Himself. "HE restoreth my soul: HE leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for *his name's sake*."

Extracted from Meditations on the 23rd Psalm by A. Miller.

POETIC PAGES

Look Up!

Heb. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Psalm 34:5

On, child of God, as on you tread,

Look up!

There's nought but glory overhead,

Look up!

Remember, your bright home is there:

What matter, then, the trials here?

With Christ the glory soon you'll share –

Look up!

Oh, why should e'er the heart be sad?

Look up!

He died to make you always glad,

Look up!

Awake, and sing His fullest praise!

With Him you'll dwell through endless days;

Oh, what a thought the heart to raise!

Look up!

Would you be kept by God's own power?
Look up!

Yes, every moment, every hour
Look up!

How oft the blessed Lord when here
Would seek some burdened heart to cheer!
Would we His own example share –
Look up

If daily you would be sustained,
Look up!
In all around the heart is pained;
Look up!
Ne'er tempted he to look within,
The only way to keep from sin
Is this – be occupied with Him:
Look up!

No longer hanging on the tree;
Look up!
He lives in glory now for thee;
Look up!
If we would manifest Him here,
The eye must gaze upon Him there;
So shall we, changed, His glory bear –
Look up!

For constant power to run the race,
Look up!
He giveth strength, He giveth grace;
Look up!
And tell the lost what Christ has done
To fit them for the Father's home;
Yea, spread the news: He soon will come –
Look up! *Anon.*

That bright and blessed morn is near
When He the Bridegroom shall appear,
And call His bride away.
Her blessing then shall be complete,
When with her Lord she takes her seat
In everlasting day.

The days and months are gliding past,
Soon shall be heard the trumpet's blast
Which wakes the sleeping saints.
The dead in Christ in glory rise,
When we with them shall reach the skies
Where Jesus for us waits.

What wonder, joy, and glad surprise
Shall fill our hearts as thus we rise,
To meet Him in the air;
To see His face, to hear His voice,
And in His perfect love rejoice,
Whose glory then we'll share.

No more deferred our hope shall be,
No longer through a glass we'll see,
But clearly face to face.
We 'll dwell with Jesus then above,
Whom absent we have learned to love,
Blest, samples of His grace.

O may this hope our spirits cheer,
While waiting for our Saviour here;
He'll quickly come again.
O may our hearts look for that day,
And to His word responsive say,
"Come, Jesus, Lord, Amen."

G.W. Frazer (1840-1896)

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.