

Words  
Of  
Peace  
&  
Truth

No. 96: September – December 2015

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**WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH**  
*(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19)*  
**NO. 96: SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2015**

**Editorial**

This issue completes 30 years in the production of this magazine. Everything about God – His will, His ways, His actions – is perfect. This has been especially displayed in His Son, of whom it was said, “He does all things well” (Mark 7:37). Alas, the same cannot be said of us; I certainly find imperfection in all I do and I am sure that the magazine has suffered from this over the years. Yet God is above all that we do and it continues to be my prayer that He will use this little effort (so long as I am able to sustain it) to magnify Christ to the readers and bring God’s truth before them, over against the flood of erroneous messages that are emanating not only from secular sources but also, alas, from people claiming to be Christian leaders and teachers. May the Lord Jesus keep us all close to Himself in the face of these things!

Surely one thing that should concern us is the way in which God’s gospel is presented. In his epistle to the Romans Paul gives us a masterly setting out of the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and I commend the first article to the reader for the way important truth from that epistle is explained to us. Perhaps older readers might bring this to the attention of younger people?

Unfortunately, in the last distribution of the magazine some address labels became detached in the post and the blank envelopes were returned to me. If any readers did not receive WPT No. 95, please will they let me know. G.S.B.

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## OUR RELATIONS WITH GOD

Romans **5:** 1, 2, 11. **6:** 20-23. **8:** 15-17. **12:** 1-2.

ON a previous occasion \* we considered some of the blessed relationships that God has taken with men. We considered Him first of all as Creator, then as Saviour – “God our Saviour,” and then as Father. These titles bring out His glory, so that we might know Him and love Him and worship Him.

I have before me now with the Lord’s help, to take up the truth from the side of our relations with God, for if God has taken up these blessed relationships with us, He has in mind that we should be brought into definite and permanent relationships with Himself. So I have turned to this great foundational epistle to the Romans, in which we learn the foundations of our relationships with God. The truth of this epistle must underlie all our links with God, if we are to be here for His pleasure. In the Old Testament, when God gave instructions as to the building of the tabernacle, there were boards of acacia wood, and each one stood in two sockets of silver, speaking to us of the foundations on which we stand in relation to God. Silver speaks of redemption and the efficacy of the work of Christ, upon which alone we can stand, if we are to be in right relations with God, and if we are to contribute to His service. The truth of the Gospel is unfolded in this epistle by the Spirit of God for our enlightenment, so that we might come into this position of security and righteousness that God has established, and, not only that, but that we might take up these permanent relationships with Him. He has in mind, not only that we should be saved from divine judgment, not only that we should be saved, too, from this present evil world, but that we should be set up here in righteousness, in power and in affection, in relationships that

\*See ‘*Words of Peace & Truth*’ No. 94 (Jan-Apr. 2015), p. 7.

God Himself has established, and in which we can minister to His heart in responsive praise, and in devoted service.

So I start with this great subject of peace with God, which lies at the very threshold of our relations with God. We can understand how Job, among the questions that surged through his soul in all his difficulties, could say, "How can man be just with God?" (Job 9:2). If we are to have peace with God, this question of our sins must be settled, involving God's own righteousness, for the light of His own righteousness shines before us. God, the Creator, must judge what is evil, for He cannot tolerate sin in His holy presence; but He has come out from His own side, and established His rights in mercy. It is the secret of peace, and the secret of spiritual prosperity, to understand how God Himself has established His right to bless. The blood upon the mercy seat is the expression of God's righteousness, "that he should be just, and justify him that is of the faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). Quite apart from our coming into it, God has established, in the presence of the whole universe, His perfect right to show mercy to guilty sinners and to bless them according to the desires of His own heart. The basis of that is in the precious blood of Jesus. In the language of the type, the blood has been taken into the holiest of all, and sprinkled upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat (*see Leviticus 16 – Ed.*), so that not a single voice in the universe can challenge His right to bless, according to the desires of His own heart.

The first thing is that God has established His right to bless. Now, how are you and I to be blessed? Only upon the principle of faith. The scripture (Rom. 4) establishes this so clearly from the history of Abraham. Abraham was blessed, not on the ground of anything that he could do or be, but simply and solely on the ground that he believed God. God had given him a promise. God had said that He would do certain things and Abraham believed

God. God took him out to his tent door and showed him the heavens and said to him, an old man without a child, “So shall thy seed be!” You may say ‘What an impossible thing to happen to such a man!’ But it is said, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” It was an impossible thing according to human understanding for Abraham to have a son; and it is equally impossible, apart from the precious blood of Christ, for a holy and a righteous God to justify and to reckon righteous in His sight, an ungodly sinner who is sunk in sin. But God has displayed His own glory in this way. He would point the eyes of our faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. The closing verses of chapter 4 bring out the way in which we can come into a conscious sense of being justified by faith, being reckoned righteous by God. The Lord Jesus Christ, as it tells us here, “has been delivered for our offences and has been raised for our justification.” What a moment it is when the truth of justification by faith first comes into our hearts, and moves them in praise and in liberty in the presence of God!

Many of us here know about the history, several hundreds of years ago, of Martin Luther, who was in the darkness of Roman Catholicism, when the light of these verses came into his heart. He had been groping in the darkness for many, many years, seeking light, and here it was in the Scriptures all the time. There came a time when the Holy Spirit shed the light into his heart, and it completely altered his life and gave him a new outlook. Instead of striving to become righteous with God on the ground of his own efforts and works, he apprehended that God had established His own righteousness and that He had brought in another Object for his faith to rest upon – the Lord Jesus Christ, who “has been delivered for our offences and has been raised for our justification.” The one who believes on “him who has raised from among the dead Jesus our Lord” is justified. The God against whom we have sinned has raised from among the dead the One who charged Himself with our sins. As we look away to Him, we

see Him there, risen and glorified, without our sins. Our sins have been left behind for ever. The one who was delivered for our offences has been raised for our justification, so that we can say, through God's grace, "I am as clear before God as Jesus is."

Many illustrations have been used in regard to this wonderful truth, but I prefer to go to the Scriptures themselves. In the book of Leviticus (*chapter 14*) you will remember how the leper on the day of his cleansing had to go to the priest with two little birds. One of these birds, we are told, was to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. Think of God going into all these details in the Old Testament for our sakes! I am speaking to some boy or girl who desires to have peace with God. Think of what God has done in order to help you! These two little birds are brought to the priest; one was killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and the other was dipped in the blood of the slain bird and let go into the open field. Can you imagine the feelings of the cleansed leper as he saw that little bird killed? He would say, "That little bird was killed for me, because of my leprosy." And then, as he saw the other bird let go into the open field, he would say, "I am cleansed and free." The Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to those two birds – one blessed Person. He went into death as the Victim, but He came up out of death, in all the power and efficacy of that death, in resurrection life, clear and free of everything which He took upon Himself when He died and bore the judgment of God. God would say to that man, 'You are as clear and free now to come into my presence, as that bird is to fly into the open field.'

Look away to Jesus. There is no sin attaching to Him, no guilt attaching to Him, a risen and glorified Saviour in the presence of God. You can say through God's grace that He is your righteousness. Satan may charge you with many things, but look away to Jesus. He is the measure of your righteousness before God. So we read in chapter 5, "we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have also access by

faith into this favour in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.” The past, the present and the future, are all completely assured. We have a future now; we are looking beyond all the conditions of turmoil and pressure around us. We are looking right on to the day when God’s glory will shine out, when Christ Himself will come again and be glorious in this very earth, where He suffered and died. We can sing a song of deliverance and of victory.

I pass on for a moment to verse 11. The apostle under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is bringing before us wave after wave of blessing – “not only that,” he says. So we can even boast in tribulations, for the very pressures and sorrows, taken up in the light of God’s grace, become occasions of learning more of His love, “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.” Then he says, “not only that, but we are making our boast in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom now we have received the reconciliation.” God Himself becomes the joy and boast of the believer. It is a wonderful thing to know God. Instead of hiding away from His presence, we learn to trust Him and to know Him, so that we can actually make our boast in Him “through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom now we have received the reconciliation.” Not only are we reckoned righteous before God, cleared of every charge and brought into a position of cloudless peace, but we are brought into such a position that God can detain us for His own pleasure. He says, as it were, ‘On the ground of the precious death of the Lord Jesus Christ, I can not only discharge you without any guilt resting upon you, but I can welcome you into My very presence, for you to rejoice in Me and for Me to rejoice in you.’

Now this is all to help us in relation to these permanent relationships into which God would bring us. So in chapter 6 we become *bondmen* to God. In this chapter we are concerned with the *bondage* of sin. In the early chapters it is rather the *guilt* of our

sins and how we are brought into this near position through the death of Jesus; but now it is a question of the *power* of sin. Sin is a terrible taskmaster. People in the world speak a great deal about liberty – freedom of thought. They speak about the liberty of doing what they want to do, thinking what they want to think, saying what they want to say. The Bible tells us that people who speak thus about liberty are really the slaves of corruption; they are the slaves of sin and of Satan. The only one who is really free is the one who is a bondman to God. There is a hymn which says: “Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free.” The way of true liberty and joy is to acknowledge the rights and claims of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has not only died for our sins, but He has died *to* sin and He lives to God, and we are to reckon ourselves dead indeed to sin, and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are entitled to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are entitled to reckon ourselves dead to the master that held us in bondage, and alive to the blessed God who has done so much for our deliverance. We are to yield our members “instruments of righteousness to God.” I want to encourage everyone to take this matter up, so that we yield our members, that is to say, our bodies. Our bodies have been the instruments of sin and Satan, doing our own wills, fulfilling our own lusts, but our bodies now are to come under a new control, the ownership of divine love. Think of the One who has given everything for our deliverance by redemption! What a claim He has upon us! Can anyone hold back from yielding to the authority and control of the Lord Jesus and of God Himself? We have been “bought with a price.” What a price indeed has been paid for our deliverance from the power of sin and Satan! What claims God has upon each one of us, and how ready we should be to yield ourselves to Him! This is not a legal demand. This is the compelling power of divine grace brought to bear upon us in the presentation of the Lord Jesus and His precious death, so that we might yield ourselves unreservedly to God.

God claims us now as His bondmen. The word “bondman” is the ordinary word used for a slave. A slave would have no will of his own, no right to say what he would do. He would just do what his master told him to do, and that is the way in which every true believer in the Lord Jesus should move here – in the sense of the rights and claims of redeeming love, to be here in subjection to God’s will. That is the way of true prosperity and happiness; “ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end eternal life.” It leads us to holiness, that is to say, separation from the principles of this evil world, and the end is everlasting life. We are to be brought into a region of satisfied desire where we may live in the knowledge of God, and be apart from the influences of this world. God has that in mind for those who are prepared to take this way – to yield themselves to Him, to accept His claims upon them, and to take their place as bondmen of God, who seek to do His will and to please Him.

Now what we have in chapter 8 is even more blessed. We would like to come into the joy of relationship, to know something of what it is to cry, “Abba, Father,” but we must come by way of chapter 6. The acknowledgment of God’s claims upon us is the way into the holy joy and liberty of sonship. Chapter 8 is largely concerned with the blessed activities of the Holy Spirit, following our deliverance from the power of sin, not only as a master in the world, but sin in the flesh, *working* within us. We learn the way of deliverance, and the Holy Spirit comes in as the new power by which we can fulfil our responsibilities here, and by which we can live. The Holy Spirit would lead us into the consciousness of sonship. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God, was led by the Spirit. He was *born* Son of God. He was unique in His blessed Person, and in His sonship, but He is the model for us. He has died so that, on the ground of His precious death, we should be brought into the same relationship with God. We are made “sons by adoption,” and the consciousness of relationship is brought into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So it is said, “For ye have not

received a spirit of bondage again for fear, but ye have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” God desires that the youngest believer may enter into this here and now. Other scriptures tell us how we come into it, but here it is brought before us as the natural outcome of giving the Holy Spirit His place. If we really give the Holy Spirit His place, it will not be long before our hearts are turning in responsive love and in the urgent sense of our relationship with God, so that we cry, “Abba, Father.”

This blessed relationship of sons goes on into eternity. I suppose the idea of bondman has peculiar reference to conditions here, but the sons belong to heaven and to eternity. The time will come when we shall enter into it in all its fulness, for we read in this very chapter that we are “awaiting adoption, that is the redemption of our body” (verse 23). We shall enter into the fulness of it then, but by the Holy Spirit we can even now enjoy it and answer to it, in this cry of relationship and affection coming from our hearts in the power of the Spirit, “Abba, Father.”

Then the apostle continues, “the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” Not only are we sons, in all the dignity, intelligence and glory of that blessed relationship, but we are children of God, those whom He has begotten, and as such we are the objects of His care, and love, and interest, and discipline, in all the vicissitudes of our pathways here. We have the inward consciousness, by the Spirit, that we are the children of God. What confidence and joy that brings into the hearts of believers! In all the testings of our earthly life we know that, as the children of God, we can look up to the Father and take account of His love and care and interest in us. Then we are heirs, heirs to a great inheritance. These blessings have been brought within our reach and they are to be enjoyed and appropriated in the power of the Spirit.

I close with the passage in chapter 12, which is a kind of climax to the wonderful unfolding of divine grace, the only due

response from our hearts to God. You may say, “Does this differ from chapter 6?” It depends upon chapter 6, but this is rather that we are priests. It is priests who offer sacrifices to God, and the word used, “your intelligent service,” involves what is priestly. It is not the service of a slave or a bondman, necessary as that is, but it is the intelligent and holy service of a priest, one who is accustomed to dealing with holy things, and who understands something of the holiness of God, and desires to draw near to Him with a sacrifice that will be acceptable to Him. You may say, “What can I bring?” The first thing that we can bring is our bodies. Everyone of us has a body. It has once been used for the service of sin and Satan, but now, as under the impelling power of divine compassion, we can present that body to God. So that he says here, “I beseech you therefore” – it is not exactly a command. This aspect of the truth involves the feelings of the heart of God and feelings on our side. This is an entreaty. The apostle, on God’s behalf, is beseeching every one of us here. Think of God beseeching! Let us present our bodies to Him, a living sacrifice, We place our bodies on the altar; they are now for the service of God. It is a *living* sacrifice, not a dead sacrifice now. The thought of death in relation to sacrifice in this epistle is connected with Christ, the One who has died, but we can bring a *living* sacrifice, as impelled by the compassions of God.

I would appeal to you tonight, and to myself too, as to “the compassions of God.” This expression brings one back in thought to that remarkable passage in the book of Lamentations, a book that is full of tears and sorrows. In the midst of his sorrows and tears, the prophet speaks about God, and speaks to God. He says, “His compassions fail not; they are new every morning” (Lam. 3: 22, 23). God’s compassions are new every morning. An Israelite of old, passing through the desert, as he went out of his tent in the morning would find the dew on the ground, and on the dew the manna. The dew speaks of the compassions of God, the freshness that comes down from heaven. Let your first thought in the

morning be of God and His compassions. You rise in the morning and think of all the difficulties and problems and pressures, but think about the compassions of God! They are new every morning, like the dew coming upon the grass, surrounding us on every side. Jeremiah goes on to say, “great is thy faithfulness;” the faithfulness of God entering into His compassions. The manna is upon the dew. The grace that carried the Lord Jesus through this world for the will of God is ministered to us in a fresh and living way, so that we should present our bodies, as He did in perfection, “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.” It is a wonderful thing that persons like ourselves, boys and girls at school, or older ones in our daily work, whatever our occupation may be, may live our lives in this way, presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice. It is to be holy and acceptable to Him, and it is our “intelligent service.” We are viewed now as intelligent persons, marked by the intelligence of priests, who know the mind of God, and who understand what is pleasing to Him.

Then the scripture continues; “be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” We are so easily affected by things around us. We easily take on the ways, the thoughts, the manners and the speech of those around us, but we are not to be like that. We are to be affected by God’s compassions, we are to feed on Christ as the manna, and, as we do so, we shall become transformed by the renewing of our minds. We shall find new desires and new motives coming into our minds, and we shall prove in actual experience what is “the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” A man of the world would say that the will of God cannot be good and acceptable and perfect, because it cuts across his ambitions, and desires, but the believer through divine grace has become so transformed, that he now longs to be acceptable to God, and he proves, as a daily experience, how good and acceptable and perfect is the will of God. One could say of old, as to God, “His way is perfect” (*Psalms*

18:30). And His will is perfect. Behind His will is His love, and the end in view is glory.

I leave these thoughts, so feebly expressed, with the desire that we might be encouraged to seek God's help to learn what it is in a more practical way to be in settled relations with God Himself.

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

## **THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR**

2 Peter 1:13-19; Revelation 2:24-29 and 22:16-17

I am sure that we are all very conscious that the moral conditions into which the whole earth was plunged before the flood are now in evidence on every hand in our days. We read, "And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth." (Gen 6:12). And while, in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we know that the Spirit of God still remains with, and in, believers, and exercises His restraining power against the tide of lawlessness, "the mystery of lawlessness" which was already working in Paul's day is soon to reach its climax. And who of us cannot fail to notice the widespread growth of doctrinal and moral corruption even in the professing church as foretold by the Apostles?

In other words, the time is fast approaching when the words of the Lord Jesus Himself are shortly to be fulfilled – "But as the days of Noe, so also shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as they were in the days before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took all away; thus also shall be the coming of the Son of man" (*Matt. 24:37-39*). And so the believer looks to Jesus sitting at the right hand of God in the expectation of His appearing in glory and power – as we have it in poetry:-

Come then, and added to Thy many crowns,  
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,  
Due to Thy last and most effectual work,  
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world.

*(William Cowper: 'The Winter Walk at Noon')*

For in Rev. 19:11 the blessed One called Faithful and True, seen coming in power and coming to judge and make war in righteousness, is depicted as sitting on a white horse – that is, the horse of the Conqueror. Once He came in lowly grace according to the prophetic word – “Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and mounted upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Matt 21:5). But they wouldn’t have Him, and soon all will see Him come as the mighty Conqueror. I hope that all who read these words have bowed to Him who once as the lowly Saviour suffered in our stead. For He came once not to put us away for our sins, but to put away our sins for us. Thrice blessed Saviour!

*“UNTIL THE MORNING STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS”*

The power and coming of the Lord Jesus had long been foretold by the prophets – in fact from Enoch (Jude 14 & 15) to Malachi (chap. 4:1-3). But, says Peter, the word of these prophets, bearing witness to Him, was as a lamp shining in an obscure place “until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts.” But now, he says, we have the word of prophecy fully confirmed, for on the holy mount we have been eyewitnesses of His Majesty – the majesty in which He will appear when He comes with His heavenly saints in glory. And not only so, but we heard “such a voice” – the Father’s voice – uttered to Him “by the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son in whom *I* have found my delight.” The day of Christ’s appearing will surely dawn, but for faith it has dawned already – “for all ye are sons of light and sons of day” (*I Thess. 5:5*) – and the One who is the Herald of that day, the Morning Star, has now arisen in our hearts. Well, I ask myself and

all who may read these few words, ‘Do we show in our lives that the morning star has truly arisen in our hearts – the harbinger of the day?’ Are we so delivered in our hearts from this poor world which is soon coming under judgment and do we so hold the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts that we are among those “who love his appearing?”

*“I WILL GIVE TO HIM THE MORNING STAR”*

Now the second reference in the Scriptures to the morning star is in the Lord’s address to the assembly in Thyatira. From the time of Constantine the Great in the early part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. the church became worldly. For about three centuries Satan had unleashed against the church the fiery sword of persecution; this period is represented by Smyrna. When this failed to extinguish the church’s faith and heavenly hope, he used his other weapon – corruption. And so the church became affiliated with the State, or the world if you like. We see this prefigured in what the Lord has to say to the church at Pergamos. Thus the church, having left her first love, fell – a fallen church! Out of this fallen state the condition represented by Thyatira developed. In the words of another, she laid aside the gory crown of martyrdom and assumed the glittering tiara of earthly grandeur and supremacy. And thus, her “lamp” removed, she became assimilated with the world of darkness, and, instead of being a luminary in the darkness, only increased that darkness, which was to reign for many centuries.

But the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, still remained in and with the faithful remnant who, although within that system of idolatry, knew the Saviour and owned His claims. Now the Son of God (as He presents Himself in our chapter) owns this remnant, and has owned them throughout the ages. He writes to them, “. . . but, what ye have, hold fast till I come.” He says, in effect, ‘There is no prospect of recovery now to be looked for in the great religious world; all your hopes must now centre on my return’ – for He says ‘I am coming again.’ Then to the overcomer, He promises, “I will

give him authority over the nations . . . . as I also have received from my Father and I will give to him the morning star.” The false church had aspired to rule over the nations without Christ; the true saint will share the rule with Christ as He has received from His Father. And then He says “I will give to him the morning star” – a very precious possession for the heart, indeed! And so we wait and can say –

I well can wait! Thou waitest yet  
The word of that dread hour,  
Which shall Thy foes for ever set  
As footstool of Thy power. (J.N. Darby)

Well, as we wait I would quote this for our encouragement - “When the church had got to the lowest depths of darkness, then it is you get the precious promise of the morning star: ‘I will give him the morning star.’ The night is wearing on its dreary length; its long dark hours are passing slowly by. You know how in travelling by coach, as the tedious hours drag on, how eagerly the weary traveller looks out for the morning star, the promise of the coming day. And that is just what the Lord gives us here when all is at the darkest. “He gives us the morning star, His own coming” (J.B.Stoney, *New Series Vol. 3, page 85*). So let us all take courage in our waiting.

Now as we wait, are we to remain idle? By no means. The Lord says, “Let your loins be girded about, and lamps burning; and ye like men who wait their own lord whenever he may leave the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately” (Luke 12:35 & 36). “Loins girded about;” that is, the practical application of the word of truth to ourselves. “Lights burning” – a distinct confession of Christ in our words and deeds and our hearts all right and in order. Then there is the blessed privilege of doing His will in any service that He may leave in our hands to do. Let us then thus be ready for Him when He returns, as He says, “Watching.” And when He comes He will bring His

faithful bondmen into their heavenly portion and “He will gird himself and make them recline at table, and coming up will serve them.”

*“I AM THE . . . THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR”*

In the last six verses of the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus seals the words of the prophecy of the book with His own personal testimony – “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies.” And in chapter 1, verse 3, he says “Blessed is he that reads, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things written in it; for the time is near.” We do well to take account of that, for all the scenes unfolded in this book must surely come to pass. But the Lord Jesus Himself signs off, as it were, with a special communication of love to His waiting people. He writes, “I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star.” Every promise made to, and about, David will surely be fulfilled by Jesus when He establishes His kingdom on earth. But the special promise that He makes as the bright and morning star is to His heavenly bride and that promise will shortly be fulfilled.

The world will never see Jesus as the bright and morning star. It will be awakened from its slumber by “the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power, in flaming fire . . .” (2 Thess. 1:7). The morning star will no longer be shining, for the Lord Himself will have come, and His saints will have been caught up to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord. And then He will come with all His saints and they shall be manifested with Him in glory. Let us therefore be waiting and watching.

Midst darkness faith clearly sees beaming  
The light of Thy coming afar;  
We wait for the dawn of the morning,  
And hail Thee, the bright Morning Star.

*Alex Walker, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010, Auckland*

## WAITING AND WATCHING

(Luke 12:36; 1 Thess. 1:10; Matt. 24:32; Mark 13:37)

THERE is a great difference between waiting and watching. If I were expecting some one I loved very dearly, I should hardly be content to sit in an easy chair and wait till I heard them at the door; I should surely stand at the window to catch the first glimpse of them, and be ready to open the door myself. And so it is with us as believers. If we have known anything of the grace that sought us and found us when we were in all the distance of our sins from a holy God, and if we have realised the “great love wherewith he has loved us” when there was no love in our hearts for Him, surely we cannot help answering in some measure to that love. “We love Him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). And however feeble the response to that great love may be, it will be shown in a longing desire to see Him who has brought it all to us by His death on the cross. And we shall not only *wait* for Him, but *watch* for Him. And the difference between waiting and watching will be seen in everything in our ordinary path. If we are content only to *wait* for Him, we shall make *ourselves* the object, in some measure: our comforts, our houses, our gardens. There may be nothing wrong – “no harm,” as we often hear it said – in any of these things; but if they become an object to us, in just the measure in which they do *Christ* will be excluded, for they occupy some place in our hearts, and He has not really got every place as He desires to have, and is indeed worthy to have. And if He has *His* right place, these things will have *their* right place, and we shall receive every mercy from *our God*, “according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19).

Let us each search our hearts in His holy presence as to whether we are waiting or watching. “What I say unto you,” He said to His disciples when He was with them, “I say unto all, WATCH.” (Mark 13:37). May our hearts readily respond to this desire of His heart for each one. A.P.G.

*Extracted from “The Believers’s Friend,” Vol. I [1909].*

## KEYS

*Luke 2:52; Revelation 1:17, 18; 3:7; 20:1-3.*

WHEN God conveys a message to men, He does it in language that is intelligible to them. In accordance with His goodness to us as His creatures, He uses figures and signs and symbols which we can understand. He speaks of Himself as having certain “keys,” and I would like to speak to you of some of the keys of which the Lord has control. What a key means to us, is what the Lord means to convey to us when He uses the figure. Anyone who has a key to a thing has control of it. If you have the key of a house, or a room, you can come into it when you like. So when the Lord is presented as having certain keys, we recognize that He has control of the matters referred to.

Now the first key I would refer to is the “key of knowledge” of which the Lord speaks in Luke 11:52. He is speaking to the lawyers about it, bringing home to them that they had taken it away from men; that is, they had rigidly excluded Himself from their teaching and doctrine, whereas He has control of all true knowledge, and He can let men into it. We are living in days of increased knowledge, as the Scriptures foretold: “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,” Dan. 12:4. The increase of human knowledge in the last fifty years has astounded mankind, and if God allows it, there will be more to come. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ has the key of knowledge, and the control of all that is of permanent value. I want to show that He is prepared to open the door of knowledge to *you*, to bring you into a knowledge that is of eternal value.

First of all then, the Lord is the One who has the key to the knowledge of God – He knows God. He said when here on earth, “I know him” (John 8:55). The Lord Jesus knows God absolutely. Others have known Him to some extent, and

indeed, all true prosperity and growth in a Christian is by the knowledge of God. The apostle Peter says, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And again, "Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2). We know little of God, but the Lord Jesus knew Him perfectly: "I know him," He says. He knew His eternal counsels; He was "with God"; He knows the present and the future: He knows everything. Many human calculations are based on assumption; there was never any guesswork with Christ, He never supposed anything; He never assumed anything. He said, "we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen," John 3:11.

Then the Lord knows *you*. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him in John 1:47, He said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." He not only knew where he was, but He knew what was in him. He looked behind the exterior into his heart, and says of him, "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." Again, when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, as the Lord spoke to him, he said "How can these things be?" And Jesus said, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know . . . if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Think of One who can tell you what is in heaven, as well as what is on earth! He said to the publicans and sinners who drew near to hear Him, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth;" He could speak of the joy in heaven over one repenting sinner.

In John 4 He disclosed to a poor sinful woman that He knew all her history. Later, she says, “Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did”! He can unlock your past, and show you all that lies hidden there, but He would bring in the knowledge of God, so that you might be brought back to God. What I want to say is that if you want a true knowledge of God, you must come to Christ, because He alone has the key. Every other kind of knowledge will disappear, “knowledge shall vanish away,” we are told in 1 Corinthians 13: 8, but the knowledge that Christ imparts will never vanish. He will tell you about God, and about how He would meet your need, as He did that poor woman at the well of Sychar. The Lord said to her, ‘You are thirsty: I know it, but if you knew who *I* am, and what I could give you, you would have asked of me, and I would give you a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’

Dear friend, before one can get that water, we must face His scrutiny. You will have to do with Him as the One who *knows*. The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water.” But the Lord answered, “Go, call thy husband,” and then all the truth came out, and she realized that He knew everything about her. Are *you* prepared to face this? He looks into your heart and knows all your history, but above all, He knows God, and can tell you all about God, and bring you back to Him. “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18). That is where the Lord would lead you by His knowledge. One would say to the young, the key of knowledge is in the hands of Christ, not with the universities, nor in the schools. He alone can open to you the door of knowledge into that which will abide, and bring you into everlasting joy; He will put treasure into your soul; so that “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord” (Jer. 9:24). To get such knowledge as that is worth all the schools

can give you. Not that I would decry the knowledge necessary to this present life, but Christ will give you that which abides and is of eternal value – the knowledge of God, to which He alone has the key.

Now in Revelation 1 we have two more keys spoken of. The Lord says in verse 18, “I ... have the keys of hell and of death.” Let us not make Him a liar. Have you ever stopped to think that if we say something different to what the Scripture says, God says, we “make him a liar” (1 John 1:10 *see also ch. 5, v. 10 – Ed.*)? But God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). You can lie, the greatest man on earth can lie, its teachers and its religious leaders can lie, but Scripture says, “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (*Rom. 3:4*) – if you are to be blessed you must believe what God says, even though it involves your disbelieving every man, for be assured that “God cannot lie.” What a rock for your soul to rest on, that it is “impossible for God to lie” (*Heb. 6:18*). The apostle Paul says of the Lord Jesus that He is “over all, God blessed for ever” (*Rom. 9:5*). And the Lord Himself when here said, “Before Abraham was, I am” – indeed He said more, “If ye believe not that I am . . . ye shall die in your sins” (*John 8:24*). “I am,” means that He is the Eternal, the One who is not under the restrictions of time, and never was, for Jesus is God.

Well, the Lord speaking to His servant John in Revelation 1, says, “I have the keys of hell and of death.” He is the only one who has them. Death refers to the body; it is the condition of the body when life ebbs out; but Hades refers to the condition and place of the spirit after death. Death and Hades refer to the separation of the spirit from the body. Perhaps someone says, ‘I do not believe there is any spirit, for I cannot see it.’ Then you only believe what you can see with your eyes. Have you ever found the atmosphere? or life? or electricity? The greatest things around, and in us, are

invisible – we cannot see them. Get a grain of wheat and search for the life in it. Who can find life? Nobody! The very thing that makes life possible, that is the atmosphere, where is it? We cannot see it, or handle it. Is there then no God because you cannot see Him? Consider the heavens – Is there no God? What a fallacy! The truth is that ‘God IS,’ and another truth is, that the Lord Jesus Christ has the control of death and hell, and when death comes to pass, we come directly under His control. If this is so, what folly it is to live without Christ! Perhaps you choose to live without Him for twenty or thirty, or even for seventy years, yet when death comes to pass, you will pass under His immediate control. He has the keys of death and of Hades.

The Lord made this perfectly clear when He was here. You will remember Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue who sent to Him when his daughter lay dead. When He came into the presence of death we read, He “took her by the hand and called, saying, Maid arise” (*Luke 8:54*). And it says, “her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.” That is, He unlocked Hades and let that one soul out. And He could do that for all who are in it. He called to Lazarus in John 11: “he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth.” The same power that called Lazarus from the tomb, will yet call all, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth” (*John 5:28*).

Why waste your life in indifference to Christ, the only one who knows? – the One who has the keys of death, and who has disclosed that on the other side of it there are two conditions, and that between them there is a “great gulf fixed.” Scripture calls one side Paradise, and the other side Hell. On one side is eternal blessedness and joy, and on the other is remorse and torment. The Lord is Master of that situation, and He alone. You are nearer to it than you perhaps realise; indeed, there may be only one step

between you and death; as David said, “there is but a step between me and death” (*1 Samuel 20:3*). But you must have to do with the Lord, for He has the keys of death, and has the entire control when death comes. God may let you have your own will here for a time, but when death comes you pass absolutely under the control of Christ. Why then waste your life under the dominion of Satan and darkness? Why not come to Christ now? If you must have to do with Him eventually, why not come to Him in this day of salvation?

Then in Revelation 3, He speaks of Himself as having the “key of David,” which means that He has control of God’s kingdom. God has a kingdom; He is the “King Eternal;” He never abdicates, as earthly monarchs sometimes do. His throne is for ever and ever; as Nebuchadnezzar said, “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;” and “I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment” (*Daniel 4:37*). The key of the kingdom of heaven is in the hands of Christ, and He determines whether you shall come in or not, He who “opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens.” If He opens the door to you, then no one can shut you out, but if He shuts the door, then nobody can open it. Have you ever tried to get into the kingdom? The Lord Jesus said, “the violent take it by force;” that means there are some who are desperate in their efforts, and are so earnest that they will not rest till they have got into God’s kingdom. The Lord Jesus has the key to it, and the way into the kingdom is to call Jesus “Lord.” “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (*Rom. 10:9*). You own His authority over you and come into salvation. You need not fear that any enemies will get you while you are in God’s kingdom; His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His subjects are safe from the lawless powers of evil that would seek to destroy them.

See that dying robber – he discovered the Lord like this. He awoke to the fact that Jesus knew everything, that He knew all about him; that he was in the presence of God. He says to his fellow, “we receive the due reward of our deeds” (*Luke 23:41*). What made him think of his deeds? He was in the presence of the One who exposes everything. He was conscious that the Lord knew him. He says, “Lord, remember *me*.” He recognized that the Lord had such grace that He would remember even him. Then he discovered that He had the keys of death and hell, although the Lord Jesus was about to die, and the other robber too. He reckons that the Lord is to have a kingdom, and his faith embraces the Lord in this way. He discovers the One with the key of David, and that One *lets* him into God’s kingdom, and he calls Him “Lord”!

My friend, you have no chance of getting into God's kingdom unless you own Jesus as Lord. Is He your Lord? – that is the question. Those who come into the kingdom of God, are those who confess Jesus as Lord. He is the Lord of all; the acceptance of Christ in your soul, as your own Lord, gives you access to God's kingdom. You cannot continue under the dominion of sin and the dominion of the Lord at the same time; you cannot go on with evil and be subject to Christ at the same time. That is impossible. Anyone who teaches that, is darkening your soul in view of your destruction. Your salvation lies in Christ becoming your Lord; and not only so, but you own Him so, in the presence of His enemies. As Christ becomes Lord to you, you come into the kingdom which is greater than any other kingdom; He has the key of David, and He opens and no man can shut, and if He shuts, no man can open.

In Revelation 20, we read of the angel that came down with the key of the bottomless pit, or the abyss, and he shut up in that abyss the devil, the source of evil, for a thousand years.

I only draw attention to that to show you the greatness of Christ, for the angels are His servants. It says of the Lord, that He will come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him – they are *His* angels. When the Lord was born in Bethlehem, the angel referred to Jesus as “Lord.” “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (*Luke 2:10, 11*). And so at His death they said, “Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (*Matt. 28:6*). The angels are His servants, and He gives one of His servants this key to the abyss; that discloses that He has control of evil. Indeed He shuts up for a thousand years the whole influence of evil, by His own power. What an unfolding of the greatness of Christ, that He can deal with the source of evil! He will yet remove from God’s universe all evil. The One who has the key to the abyss, has power to do this.

The question you need to face is, Will *you* be shut out? There are those who will be shut out; those who stand by their own course of sin, with the old serpent the devil and Satan. Scripture speaks of a certain place where the devil and his angels are. It says, “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever” (*Rev. 20:10*). It is a place of outer darkness, and the Lord has the key of that. He has the means of excluding evil as well as of opening the door to God’s kingdom. He has the power that gives Him access to death and hades, and He can open the door of knowledge to your soul.

There is one key that the Lord does not choose to control, that He leaves with you, and that is the key of your heart. He does not take that from you. He stands at the door and knocks: He does it continually, He does not force Himself into the human heart. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking.” You have the key of your own affections, and even

though you may have bolted the door against this blessed Person, yet such is His grace that He still knocks, and says, ‘If any man open the door I will come in.’ My friend, let the appeal come home to you, “If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

May the Lord help you to open the door of your heart, the door of your whole being, and let Him come in, and He will take control of you, giving you a place in God’s kingdom, bringing you into all the blessedness of the knowledge of God. I would commend Him to you, so that you may turn to Him and receive Him. It says, “As many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12).

*Gospel address by W.J. House, given probably in the 1930’s.*

### **Expediency and Covetousness**

There are, I may say, four causes for the difference of opinion which, alas, is so widespread among us, and so humbling to us all. What can be a more humiliating picture than to see members of the one body, each of whom is a temple of the Holy Spirit, holding and advocating with all the earnestness of their abilities, opinions directly at variance with one another?

The first cause is *ignorance*. . . .

Now the reason why this ignorance is not enlightened and corrected is, that with the mass it is not simply ignorance as it was with Nicodemus, Thomas, or Mary Magdalene; it has grown into *prejudice*, which is another cause for the difference of opinion. . . .

The third cause is *expediency*. This often occurs where there is neither ignorance nor prejudice, and simply arises from looking at things in relation to man instead of in relation to God. James

from expediency pressed and induced Paul to show his zeal for the law, Acts 21: 20. Usefulness is generally grounded on expediency, which urges the claim of need, apart from the mind and pleasure of the Lord. This was Martha's mistake, her work was a useful and a necessary one seeing as man sees; but she consulted her own mind and not the Lord's. It is amazing the divergence of opinion which must exist between a Martha and a Mary; the more expedient the thing seems to be, the more difficult it is to renounce it for the word of God. Nothing seemed more natural than that David, sitting in his own house of cedars, should want to build a house for the Lord; and though it was good that it was in his heart, yet the word of the Lord countermanded it. It would be as difficult to effect an agreement between the man of expediency and the man of faith who is simply led by the word, as to make a man looking eastward see what the man looking westward sees. The man of expediency can always reason well, and has plenty of evidence to establish his argument. The man of faith sees what God says, and waits in patience to fulfil His mind, but there can be no oneness of judgment between them.

The last cause whereby the mind is warped and hindered from judging according to God is *covetousness*. Covetousness is desiring something for one's own gratification. There is the idol in the heart, and all truth is qualified or reduced in order to spare this idol or taste. We find in Ezekiel 14: 4, "Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols." If I come simply to the word of God I shall always find that the thing which most hinders me is the one which the word most rebukes; but if I am determined at all cost to save my idol, whatever it be, I must limit the action of the word, and this limitation will inevitably run through every subject in the word which I take up. Have we not discovered how differently and boldly we insist on a passage, when a covetous course has

been surrendered, which was garbled and glossed over formerly? The covetous man not only differs from the fearless asserter of the full truth, but he shuns the teacher, as the Galatians and all that were in Asia shunned Paul. There is always a twofold action of the word of God; one is deepening in your soul the truth you have truly and simply received, the other is correcting, and exposing either the working of the flesh in you, or its tendency; and when the heart is simple it likes both; and thus it is led into the mind of the Lord, and all who are so must have the same mind and the same judgment.

May the Lord exercise our hearts and consciences, that we may not be harbouring anything which is a hindrance to oneness of mind and judgment, for His name's sake.

*J.B. Stoney (1814-1897): New Series Vol. 10, pp. 7-11.*

### Renewing our Minds

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (*Romans 12:2 – NKJV*)

In today's text the apostle brings before us the necessity of non-conformity to the world and the *renewal of our minds*. These two imperatives are definitely linked together for if we are to walk differently from the world and not conform ourselves to its ways, then we are going to have to think differently. The word “transformation” in the Greek is *metamorphoo*, from which our English word “metamorphosis” is derived. There must be a *transformation* of our minds through the *renewal* of our thought patterns and of our worldview.

Before we were saved we were led by the “desires of the flesh and **of the mind**” as well as by “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:3,2). Our minds were darkened and controlled by these baneful influences. But now the Holy Spirit is at work in

renewing our thinking (if we allow Him) and this will bring about a transformation, a “metamorphosis.” He does this through the written Word of God. As we read and meditate on the Word, and begin the habit of thinking scripturally this will cause us to be renewed in the spirit of our minds (Eph. 4:23). Peter says for us to, “desire earnestly the pure **mental** milk of the Word” (1 Pet. 2:2 JND; the translation note says: “Mental has the sense of suited to the rational faculties – the mind in contrast with the body”).

Along with meditation in the Word, we should always have our minds occupied with things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8). Paul exhorts us here to “meditate (or think, KJV) on these things.” Let us avoid filling our minds with the evil presented in the world through its media. One has wisely said, “The key to peace within and power without is always being occupied with what is good.” Let us desire this transformation of our thinking, as it is often also said, “The battle begins with the mind.”

*By Brian Reynolds; reproduced from “the Lord is Near,” published by Believers Bookshelf Canada, with kind permission.*

## **POETIC PAGES**

### **The Man in the Glory**

I wake in the morning with thoughts of His love  
Who is living for me in the glory above,  
Ev’ry minute expecting He’ll call me away,  
And that keeps me bright all the rest of the day.

But the moments speed forward, and on comes the noon  
Yet still I am singing: “He’ll come very soon;”  
And thus I am watching from morning till night  
And pluming my wings to be ready for flight.

There's a Man in the glory I know very well;  
I have known Him for years, and His goodness can tell:  
One day in His mercy He knock'd at my door,  
And seeking admission, knock'd many times o'er.

But when I went to Him, and stood face to face,  
And listen'd awhile to His story of grace,  
How He suffer'd for sinners, and put away sin,  
I heartily, thankfully welcomed Him in.

We have lived on together a number of years,  
And that's why I neither have doubtings nor fears,  
For my sins are all hid in the depths of the sea,  
They were carried down there by the Man on the tree.

I am often surprised why the lip should be curl'd,  
When I speak of my Lord to the man of the world;  
And notice with sorrow his look of disdain,  
When I tell him that Jesus is coming again.

He seems so content with his houses and gold,  
While despising the ark, like the people of old,  
And yet at His coming I'm sure he would flee,  
Like the man in the garden, who ate of the tree.

I cannot but think it is foolish of souls  
To put all their money "in bags which have holes,"  
To find in the day that is coming apace,  
How lightly they valued the "riches of grace."

As fond as I am of His work in the field,  
I would let go the plough, I would lay down the shield:  
The weapons of service I'd put on the shelf,  
And the sword in its scabbard, to be with Himself.

*/P.T.O.*

But I'll work on with pleasure, while keeping my eyes  
On the end of the field where standeth the prize.  
I would work for His glory, that when we shall meet  
I may have a large sheaf to lay down at His feet;

That He too, with pleasure His fruit may review:  
Is the Man in the glory a stranger to you?  
A stranger to Jesus, what, do you know  
He is washing poor sinners much whiter than snow?

Have you lived in a land where the Bible's unknown,  
That you don't know the Man who is now on the throne?  
Ah, did you but know half His beauty and power  
You would not be a stranger another half-hour.

I have known Him so long that I'm able to say,  
The very worst sinner He'll not turn away.  
The question of sin, I adoringly see,  
The Man in the glory has settled for me.

And as to my footsteps whatever the scene,  
The Man in the glory is keeping me clean;  
And therefore I'm singing from morning till night  
The Man in the glory is all my delight.

*Geo. Cutting (1843-1934)*

### **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.