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THE DOOR: OPEN OR SHUT?

E. R. Hope

(edited and adapted)

We often talk of *the happiness of Heaven*, we think of the *delights of that glorious Land*; we know that there is no sighing or sorrow there, that all tears are wiped away, and that grief is turned into joy. Why is that beautiful place so bright? Why is it that the very name of Heaven brings thoughts of glory and rest to our minds?

We want those thoughts to come into our hearts too, we want to believe that *that beautiful Home is for us*. Do you know that *the door into that blessed Home is standing open now*, and that there is a welcome sounding from it to you if you will only listen to that voice and enter by that door? Jesus Christ says in His Gospels, "*I am the door*. by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9).

The closed door means a barrier, a hindrance, and if it is locked and barred, it quite prevents you from entering the house. Perhaps you knock and knock again, and no-one appears to hear you, and so you turn away disappointed. That is "*the closed door!*"

A young man once had left his home to become a soldier in a distant war. He left without one word of farewell, weary of his home life, and tired of his father's strict rule and his mother's tears and entreaties to him to walk in the heavenly way, and to follow his heavenly Master. He took the Queen's shilling (formerly a soldier was paid a shilling on enlisting), and, after he enlisted, he strove with all his might to forget the long years of his boyhood and godly upbringing.

He fought in several battles, visited strangely new scenes, and at last, when he obtained leave to return to England, the one thought that filled his heart was of *Home, sweet Home!* How differently he viewed it now! How he longed once more to take his seat by the old fireside, to look upon his father's kindly face, and hear his mother's tender words of love, and see her smile as she greeted her returning boy after this long, long absence!

But he had enlisted under a false name; he had never written to his parents, and they had not the least idea where their wandering boy had gone. Still, he hoped for the best; and he arrived at the seaport town in England, where he

was discharged from the ship, and took a ticket to the little village in a midland county where his parents had lived.

He alighted at the station, and walked quickly through the country lanes, till he arrived at the old cottage which he used to call "*Home*."

He went through the little wicket-gate, and knocked at the door. Yes, he knocked many times, but in vain. There was no response and no friendly voice to welcome him. Walking to the other side of the cottage, he found that it was closed, and evidently deserted.

Presently a friendly neighbour came towards him, and from her lips he heard the sad story.

His father and his mother had never ceased to grieve for their absent son, still so dearly loved, and so deeply longed for. His father had been taken ill some time before, and after lingering for a little while, had died, leaving his mother a lonely widow. For many months she lingered on, often hoping once more to see her beloved son; but a few weeks before his return she had laid herself down on her quiet bed to die. Neighbours visited and attended her, and she thanked them all, but, day by day, she asked for Sidney – her son. "*When will he come again?*" she said.

It was all over now. And he found on his return. "*The Closed Door*." It is said that the young man never recovered fully from the shock he felt when he knew that his return was "*too late!*"

Let me tell you another true story.

A storm was raging once on the Coast of one of the Scottish Islands. An English family had taken a farm house amidst that beautiful scenery; it was a very lonely place, and few people seemed to pass that way. However, on this particular night, when the wind was blowing, and the rain was falling, along with showers of sleet and hail, they were all sitting comfortably in the drawing-room by the warm fire, and pitying any one that might be out of doors on such a night.

Presently they heard a loud knock at the front door. They went to open it, but no one was there. They then heard a loud knock at one of the side doors, and making their way down the dark passage to draw back the bars and bolts, what was their surprise to find that there was no one there either.

This knocking was repeated now at another door; and at last they found a little girl who had lost her way, and, terrified by the wind that was blowing over the cliff and the sleet dashing into her face, almost blinding her, she had run for refuge to this house, where she had seen bright lights burning in the window.

She had knocked at the first door, but had not patience to wait for a friendly hand to open it; and, finding it shut, she had run to another door and knocked there – again without waiting; and thus had made the mistake of thinking that there was no welcome for her within.

You can imagine *how tenderly the child was brought into that house, and seated in the warmest corner by the fireside, her wet clothes dried, and a comfortable bed provided for her for the night. The children who lived there could not do enough to make the little girl happy, and to show her that she was safe and amongst kind friends. She found an open door, though she hardly expected it.*

There are many *troubled sinners who go from place to place seeking to find comfort, but finding none.* Knocking loudly at earthly doors of pleasure or forgetfulness, still they find themselves exposed to the storm of this world's sin and woe.

If they will only *knock at God's open door, and call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to save them and to be their Friend, He will hear their cry, and they will hear His voice, saying to them, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28).

There is *safety within the open door, and the threshold is very easy to cross, and "whosoever will may come"*; the Lord Jesus Christ has told us that we may come if we will; He has said, *"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37).

We must *come in faith, not doubting that God loves sinners, and that Jesus Christ died to save them; and that now His loving hand is stretched out to-day, full of power and grace, so that even we ourselves may have home, sure and certain, for time and for eternity, where our dear Lord Jesus will care for us, and where none can ever harm us or injure our peace.*

Come then to Him – Come into God's salvation – and believe Him when He says, that all will be for ever well.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

An Evangelistic Supper was held at Grove House on Tuesday evening, 27 March. We were pleased to welcome a good number of visitors on this occasion who joined us for this meal and fellowship. During the evening, Pastor Green brought a challenging gospel message which, we pray, will be used by God for the blessing of some who were present that evening.

The first Open Air meeting of the season took place on Saturday morning, 7 April, in the Guildhall Square. Although there were a few hecklers, others received tracts and some engaged in conversation. We rejoice that we have this freedom to make known the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in Salisbury city-centre, and we trust in God who has promised that His Word will accomplish that which He pleases, and will prosper.

Pastor Watts was conducting the services at Chardsmead Baptist Church, Bridport on the Lord's Day, 8 April. We were pleased to welcome to our pulpit that day, Rev Tom Yates, Pastor of Maryport Street Baptist Church, Devizes, and we were much blessed through his ministry. We are regularly in prayer for these two churches in Bridport and Devizes that our sovereign God will show Himself strong on their behalf and graciously supply their particular needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

"For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Psalm 132: 13,14.

SALISBURY REFORMED SEMINARY

Since the last *Messenger* report, the Seminary has provided two further weekends of special study, 9-10 March and 6-7 April.

On 9 March, lectures were delivered on *Text Transition* (1) (Malcolm Watts), *Post Modernism* (Christopher Buss), *New Calvinism* (CB), *Text Transition* (2) (MW), *The Canon of Scripture* (1) (MW); and on 10 March, further lectures included *The Canon of Scripture* (2) (MW), *The Preacher's Library* (Simon Green*), *Preaching or Lecturing* (Dewi Higham), *Evangelism & Revival* (DH), and *Translation Philosophy* (MW).

On 6 April, the lectures were as follows: *Worship Overview* (MW); *Resources available on the Internet* (SG*), *Book Studies: Ezra & Nehemiah* (1) (Richard Clarke); *Book Studies: Ezra & Nehemiah* (2) (RC); *The Trinity* (1) (MW); and on 7 April, the lectures were: *The Trinity* (2) (MW); *Early Church Fathers* (1) (Roland Burrows); *Early Church Fathers* (2) (RB); *Early Church Fathers* (3) (RB); and *The Eternal Decrees* (1) (MW).

*Simon Green continues to give his weekly Greek lectures via Skype and good progress is being made in the teaching of Greek.

Text Transition: After noting that the greater part of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew (the few exceptions being written in Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew), these lectures traced the preservation of the inspired, original Texts, which, under God's "singular care and providence", were "kept pure in all ages", and this by means of the guardianship of the Jews and their being kept alongside the Sacred Ark in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. These original Texts were painstakingly copied and recopied by Jewish Scribes, who provided remarkably faithful reproductions of the Texts, which later were carefully preserved in that pure state by Jewish scholars known as the Massorettes. Their Hebrew Massoretic Text provides us with a true and authentic Hebrew Old Testament Text.

The New Testament, originally written in Greek, has also been divinely preserved, so that in the Textus Receptus (or the Received Text) - representing the great majority of existing Greek manuscripts, printed by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza and Elzevir, and underlying all the great Reformation Bibles (including the Authorized Version) - the sacred, original New Testament Text has come down to us in a marvellously pure and exact state. The means God used to preserve this true Text are set forth in considerable detail.

Post Modernism and New Calvinism: The purpose of these lectures was to develop an understanding of current worldly, philosophical, social and spiritual trends being embraced by many in the professing Church. Biblical guidance was given on how to respond, with meekness and humility: standing for the truth and being aware of the impact these trends have on the hearers of the Gospel.

Canon: The word is derived from a Greek word originally meaning a “reed” or “staff” and it came to mean a “measuring rod”; and then, metaphorically, it came to be applied to Scripture, the infallible “rule” for faith and practice. On what grounds were books included in Scripture? Historically, two answers have been given to this question: “the authority of the Church” (the Roman Catholic position); and “the Witness of the Spirit” - that is, the testimony and inward illumination of the Holy Spirit (one early Protestant view). More satisfactory principles for determining canonicity were presented and considered.

The Preacher’s Library: In this lecture, consideration was given to the various types of books that students will find useful in sermon preparation.

Preaching or Lecturing: One manifestation of the decline and downgrade of the church in our days is the lecturing style of preaching. The lecturing style is often academic, logical and calm. True preaching which declares the great truths of Scripture with heart and fire is a product of blessing. True preaching of the Word of God has passion, urgency, liberty, rejoicing, exhortation, brokenness, seriousness, worship and is in the Spirit.

Evangelism and Revival: The church must always preach the gospel and evangelise. It is always an honour to declare the Gospel light in a dark world. In revival, however, more is done in a short space of time than can be accomplished in a lifetime of endeavours. The blessing and fruitfulness of the preaching of the gospel in times of revival are exceptional. Furthermore, evangelism is more biblical in times of revival and centres on the saving message of the cross.

Translation Philosophy: This was understood to mean the principles which should guide men in the work of translating the Scriptures. The different approaches to translation are identified: “paraphrase” (basically, this is putting the Scriptures in the translator’s own words); “dynamic (or functional) equivalence” (thought for thought translation, the translator attempting to express what the author intended); “formal (or essentially literal) equivalence” (word for word translation, attempting to be as precise and as accurate as possible); and “optimal equivalence” (as literal as possible, but as free as is occasionally necessary to render the original text understandable. These philosophies were assessed in the light of God’s Word and reasons were given

for a literal translation with minimal interpretation, except where absolutely required.

Overview of Worship: In this introductory lecture, worship was carefully defined and then consideration was given to “The Nature of Pure Worship”, which is born of divine revelation and shows honour and respect for God’s infinite excellence; after which we took serious account of “The Standard of Pure Worship”, which is the written Word of God, and, as Calvin wrote, “We may not adopt any device which seems fit to ourselves, but look to the injunctions of Him who alone is entitled to prescribe...God disapproves of all modes of worship not expressly sanctioned by His Word”; and, finally, emphasis was given to “The Importance of Pure Worship”, because only pure worship will prove to be a means of grace, bringing God’s presence and blessing to the Church and to the World.

Resources available on the Internet: Attention was drawn to helpful resources, and this included showcasing some computer programmes designed for in-depth Bible study and sermon preparation.

Book Studies - Ezra and Nehemiah: After some introductory information, concerning prophecy and fulfilment of promise, key-dates, reigning kings, and the three returns to Jerusalem, the focus fell upon these books’ relevance for today and their main themes for preaching.

The Trinity: Observing that there is a profound mystery about God which only Special Revelation can explain to men, the great truth was presented that to know God, as He is revealed, is salvation, blessedness and eternal life. Then, turning to the subject in hand, certain important terms were considered: “the Godhead” (the divine nature in its unity); “Persons” (eternal distinctions within God’s Being, each related to the others and each with personal characteristics); and “Substance” (essentially, that which is beneath everything else – the divine, mysterious essence, each of the Persons being of “one and the same substance” (Athanasius). Then three steps were taken in approaching the doctrine: first, “There is Hint of Plurality in God”; second, “This Plurality in God is a Trinity”; and third, “The Blessed Trinity is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” The teaching of both Old and New Testaments were carefully examined.

The Early Church and the Early Church Fathers: Taking some account of the Early Christian Centuries, brief sketches were given of the most notable of the Early Church Fathers and also of some of the more significant writings of this period. Also included were some notes on the New Testament Canon, Bishops and Presbyters, the impact of Christianity on early society, early church persecution, and some of the heresies which adversely affected the church and those champions of the Truth who opposed them.

The Eternal Decrees: These are God's Purposes, framed and fixed before the world began. In this lecture, the first of two, we gave time and thought to "The Nature of the Eternal Decrees" ("the counsel of his will"), "The Extent of the Eternal Decrees" ("God wills whatever he does ...and God does whatever He wills" - Dr. J. L. Dagg), and "The Result of the Eternal Decrees" (glory and praise for God, and great blessing for His elect people). This left us humbled before God, who is indeed "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."

The students have testified to the blessing they have received thus far. We conclude our report with their own very encouraging words:

Kevin Armstrong:

"We have appreciated very much the prayers and support of all the churches in the early days of the Seminary. We can truly say we have known the Lord's presence with us in each and every session that has been held and His help in the understanding of His Word.

We are also grateful to the lecturers for their godly and earnest teaching of the Scriptures which has been most valuable in preparing us for future ministry that we trust the Lord will lead us into. The sessions have been most blessed in their doctrinal content and in their application to the Church as we know it in our day. They are also helpful practically in any future endeavour to teach others and make the Gospel known to our needy generation.

Praying that the Lord will continue to richly bless the seminary in the months to come in the vital work of equipping us to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Alex Clarke:

"I began the course at Salisbury Reformed Seminary on 8th January 2018 and so far it has been a tremendous blessing and encouragement!"

Each day at the Seminary is comprised of 1 hour 15 minute lectures with breaks in-between including a 1 hour lunch break. This has proved to be really helpful because we are able to maintain good concentration throughout the whole of the day.

We have had a wide range of biblical topics and doctrine spanning from evangelism, church history, the attributes of God, to scriptural topics and complete overviews of certain books of the Bible. On top of this I am learning to read the Bible in Greek which is a challenging and yet exciting experience!

The lecturers are all pastors many of them from different parts of the country who visit the Seminary to teach. They are pastors with a heart for the Lord and not only do they minister from the Scriptures to our minds but also to our hearts. Thus, the time we spend at the Seminary is both diligent study and Christian fellowship. There is also a library of many books ranging from history, theology and doctrine, to commentaries on Bible books, which we can borrow at any time.

The work and preparation that has gone into the Seminary, with all its resources, facilities, and teaching is nothing less than a real labour of love, both for the Lord and for men desiring to be equipped for the ministry of the Gospel of Christ. I would highly recommend this Seminary to any men feeling called to the ministry.

In short, Salisbury Reformed Seminary provides sound biblical teaching which ministers to both our minds and our hearts, nurturing our faith and moving us to grow in our relationship with the Lord as empowered by His Holy Spirit."

OPEN STUDY WEEKEND

God willing, on **Friday 8 June and Saturday 9 June**, **Dr Michael Haykin** will be lecturing on **‘The Particular Baptists and the Revival in the 18th Century’**. All are welcome to attend these lectures with the students, on both or either of these days. It will be an opportunity to see Grove House, meet some of the Trustees and to chat with the students, as well as hearing an excellent speaker. **The lectures which will start at 10am and finish at about 4.30pm**, will be delivered in **the large meeting room at Grove House, 18 Wilton Road, Salisbury SP2 7EE**. Teas and coffees will be provided but you will need to bring your own lunch with you. **If you are interested in attending, please email or write to the Administrator, Patricia Dunn, at this address:-**

Salisbury Reformed Seminary c/o
Tabernacle Cardiff, Pen-y-Wain Road,
Roath, CARDIFF, CF24 4GG. Tel: 07790 414574;
Email: patricia.dunn2201@btinternet.com

We need to have an idea of numbers, so we can make the necessary arrangements. On the day itself, please come to the entrance lobby at the side of Grove House to register your arrival.

SALISBURY CONFERENCE 2018

This year **28-29 September** will mark the 22nd Salisbury Conference and, God willing, our guest speaker will again be **Dr Michael Haykin**, currently serving as Professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

The general theme of the conference will be **The Triumph of Christ and His Church**.

The great Protestant Reformers left to their successors a legacy of biblical optimism. John Calvin wrote: “Undoubtedly, Thy name shall be magnified and celebrated throughout the whole world” and, profoundly influenced by him, the Puritans taught the same doctrine and kept the same emphasis. Thomas Goodwin, a leading Puritan, referred to a time in the future when multitudes

shall be brought to Christ who, he said “hath had but little takings of the world yet, but he will have before he hath done”. In a later generation, Jonathan Edwards, the outstanding American theologian, expressed the hope that “there shall be a glorious effusion of the Spirit with the clear and powerful preaching of the Gospel.” At the close of the 18th century, William Carey, pioneer missionary to India, cherished a firm belief that “the work, to which God hath set His hands, will infallibly prosper”, and therefore, he declared, “God’s cause will triumph.” In these days, the Church is being severely tried, but we should not lose heart. Better days are promised, when, in Christ, “all the families of the earth (will) be blessed.” Believing this, we work and pray for such a time, when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” We trust this year’s Conference will do much to encourage God’s people; and may our gracious God hasten the time when His favour and goodness will be both felt and known, to His eternal glory!

The titles and times of the addresses will be as follows:

Friday, 28 September

7.30pm The Triumph of Christ and His church in the Teaching of the Puritans

Saturday, 29 September

10.30am The Triumph of Christ and His Church in the Thought and Experience of Jonathan Edwards

1.00pm The Triumph of Christ and His Church in the Era of New Missionary Endeavour with Andrew Fuller and William Carey

2.30pm The Triumph of Christ and His Church – The Great Challenges of the 19th & 20th Centuries

Dr Haykin will also be preaching at the **Sabbath Services on 30 September at 11am and 6.30pm** and speaking at **the After Church Meeting beginning at approximately 8.30pm.**

Sincerely and most warmly we invite you all to this year’s Salisbury Conference.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

John Willison (1680-1750)

Part 2

So much for the Sacramental Elements; let us come next to the Sacramental Actions.

THE SACRAMENTAL ACTIONS

Q. What are the outward sacramental actions in the Lord's Supper?

A. They are twofold, some on the part of the administrator; and some on the part of the receivers.

Q. What are these actions on the administrator's part?

A. They are four; as may be seen in Christ's example: 1. He took bread. 2. He blessed the bread and wine. 3. He brake the bread. 4. He gave both of them to His disciples.

Q. What is signified by the minister's taking of bread?

A. It signifies God the Father's choosing and taking Christ among men, to be a Surety and Sacrifice for lost sinners, and his laying upon him as such, the whole sins of the elect, John 3: 16; Isa. 53:5,6; 2 Cor. 5: 21.

Q. What is signified by the blessing of the bread and wine?

A. It signifies these things: 1. The consecrating and setting apart of the bread and wine, from a common, to an holy and sacramental use; and that by solemn prayer for a blessing from heaven upon them. 2. This blessing being also expressed by the giving of thanks, it signifies a solemn thanksgiving to God for his astonishing grace and mercy to lost sinners in giving them a Saviour and Surety; and also for his giving them this blessed ordinance for conveying and sealing Christ's glorious purchase to them. 3. This blessing being of the same import with consecrating or sanctifying, it signifies God's sending his Son into the world, sanctified, blessed, and furnished with all gifts and graces needful for the discharge of his mediatory offices, and for answering of his people's necessities.

Q. What is signified by breaking of the bread in this sacrament?

A. It signifies the breaking and wounding of Christ's body, and the bruising of his soul for elect sinners, in order to satisfy God's justice, pacify divine wrath,

and purchase salvation for them; and that now the whole work of man's redemption is completed by Christ's death, which is here represented by these elements and signs.

Q. Is the breaking of the bread a necessary or essential action in this sacrament?

A. Yes; it being instituted by Christ, and practised by his apostles, with a design to teach us the necessity of Christ's death, and that an unbroken Christ could not profit sinners. And consequently we may infer, that Papists and others, who dispense the sacrament with an unbroken wafer, do egregiously (shockingly) swerve from the institution, and mar their souls' profiting by his ordinance.

Q. What is signified by the fourth sacramental action, viz. Christ's giving the broken bread, and the poured out wine to his disciples, and the minister's doing this after his example?

A. It signifies these things; 1. God's gracious and free offering of His Son, and Christ's offering of Himself to be ours, with all his purchase, upon our believing. 2. God's actual making over, giving, and sealing Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant to the worthy receivers. For as truly as bread and wine are put into their hands, and given them to be their own, and disposed of for their use, so as truly is Christ and all the benefits of the covenant made over, given and sealed to them, to be their inheritance and portion, and to be by them freely enjoyed and possessed as their own. 3. It signifies God's offering and giving Christ fully to us. For as he gives us not only the bread, but the wine also, that we may have complete entertainment, so he makes over and gives a full and complete Saviour to believing communicants. He gives Christ and all Christ to them; and all that is in him, all his offices, all his benefits, and all his promises. There is no promise reserved, no blessings excepted, or kept back: all is theirs, 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22. 4. It signifies God's making a gratuitous donation and a free gift of Christ and all his purchase, to believing communicants. For as the sacramental bread and wine are given freely by the minister to the communicants without requiring any price or good deed for them: so Christ and all his purchase are made over and given to believers in a way of the freest grace, without any worth or desert of theirs, or anything done by them for which they are bestowed, Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17. 5. The breaking, dividing, and distributing these elements among all the communicants, do signify that Jesus Christ is really, though invisibly present, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to all the worthy communicants, young and old,

poor and rich, without exception of any. He is a most knowing and faithful steward in his Father's house who will not pass by the meanest of the family.

Q. What is signified by the pouring out of the wine in the cup?

A. Christ's suffering and pouring out his blood most freely and plentifully to wash and save his people from their sins; even as freely as the wine in the sacrament is poured out to them. Hence it is said, Isa. 53:12, "He poured out his soul unto death." i. e. He gave His life and soul as freely and willingly for us, as we pour water out of a vessel.

Q. After what manner are the elements to be given to the communicants? Is the bread to be put into their mouths, or the cup into each of their hands by the ministers?

A. No; this is not agreeable to Christ's practice in the first institution, nor with the table-posture then in use, which he kept with his disciples in time of the action: speaking to them (at the giving of the elements) in the plural number, "take ye, eat ye, drink ye all of it," which import his giving the elements to those that sat next him, to be handed about from one to another; for had he given them to every particular man, he would have said, Take thou. Besides, this practice of our Saviour with his disciples suits best with that familiar way of feasting, common among people that are come to age and the use of their reason; and the communicants' taking the elements into their own hands, doth carry some resemblance of the free and deliberate consent of faith, requisite in our receiving of Christ in the sacrament, John 1:12.

Q. What are the outward sacramental actions, on the part of the communicant?

A. They are these: 1. Their taking the bread, and the cup into their hands. 2. Their eating the bread, and drinking the wine. 3. Their dividing the elements among themselves and giving to one another. 4. Their doing all this sitting in a feasting posture.

Q. What is signified by the communicants' taking the bread and cup into their hands?

A. Their cheerful stretching forth of the hand of faith to accept of a crucified Christ for their Saviour, with all his benefits, as offered to them in the gospel: and the soul's hearty compliance with the gracious terms of that offer.

Q. What is signified by our receiving of both the elements?

A. Our taking, and receiving Christ wholly, as he is held forth and offered unto us in the gospel, without making exception of any of his offices or demands. We profess hereby that we are satisfied to take Christ as he is, his person, his offices, his benefits, promises, and all that is in him: that we are content with his laws, as well as his love; his precepts, as well as his promises; and his cross as well as his crown.

Q. Have communicants a right to the cup as well as the bread?

A. Yes, certainly they have, conformably to our Saviour's institution and pattern, and his apostles' practice, which we have plainly recorded, Matt. 26:26, 27, 28, 29; 1 Cor. 11: 24, 25. And if one of the sacramental signs were wanting, believers would not have a full representation of their Redeemer's sufferings, nor a complete feast for their nourishment and strength.

Q. Are not Papists much to blame then, in taking the cup from the people?

A. Most certainly they are; for as they do a great injury to the people, so they are guilty of the greatest sacrilege before God, and rebellion against his authority, who instituted this sacred ordinance; for by the institution, the people have as good right to the cup, as to the bread. Nay our Saviour (as it were foreseeing the Papists' encroachment in this particular) is more express in his injunction concerning the cup than the bread; in these words, "drink ye all of it." Also their obedience to this injunction, is more expressly recorded than with respect to the bread, in these words, "and they all drank of it", compare Matt. 26:27 with Mark 14: 23.

Q. What is signified by the communicants' eating the bread and drinking the wine?

A. In general, it signifies our making close and particular application by faith, of Christ and all his benefits unto our souls and their various necessities and exigencies, each of us saying of Christ in a believing manner, with Thomas, John 20:28, "My Lord and my God." But more particularly, these actions as eating and drinking in the sacrament do signify; 1. Our near union with Christ. For as, by eating and drinking, the bread and the wine enter our bodies, become ours, and turn one with us; so by our receiving and applying Christ's broken body and shed blood in the sacrament by faith, Christ is mystically united to us, he is made one with us, and we one with him. All that he hath, his blood, and all the purchase of it, his merits, graces, influences, riches, &c., all are ours. 2. They signify the great satisfaction and complacency, which the believer hath in partaking of Christ and his benefits; for as eating and drinking

are actions very gratifying and pleasant to the body; so our tasting and partaking of Christ's dainties in the sacrament, is most pleasant to the hungry soul. 3. They signify the strength and increase of grace, which the believer receives by this ordinance; for as, by our eating and drinking of earthly food, our bodies are increased and strengthened for labour; so by this spiritual food, our graces are increased, and souls strengthened, for the duties of religion. Lastly. These sacramental actions denote the mutual giving, and taking between Christ and the believing communicant. As by the giving and receiving earth and stone among men, title is given and taken of a field or heritage; so by the giving and receiving of bread and wine in a sacramental way, believers get an interest in Christ and his purchase as their own inheritance; and also Christ hereby takes an interest in them, both soul and body, as his people and portion, his servants and soldiers, to obey him and fight for him all the days of their lives. Likewise by these sacred symbols, he takes possession of their souls and bodies as his temples, solemnly consecrated to him for his service and residence.

Q. Why should communicants divide the elements among themselves, and give to one another?

A. 1. That they may the more closely imitate the practice of Christ and his disciples, in partaking of the Passover and the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:17; Matt. 26:26, 27. 2. That they may testify their mutual Christian love and union among themselves, and their communion and fellowship one with another, 1 Cor. 10:17, 17.

Q. What should be the bodily posture of communicants in time of receiving?

A. It ought to be a feasting posture, or such a table-posture as is ordinary at feasts in the place of the world where we live: and that is sitting; and this we have authorized by the example of Christ and his apostles at the first institution, Matt. 26:20, 26; Luke 22:14; John 14:31. I grant indeed they sat leaning, yet still that posture is termed a sitting as in the before cited texts. Besides, that was the ordinary table-posture then in use among the Jews; which clearly warrants us to use that posture which is ordinary among us. This also is proper to signify that holy familiarity which Christ allows his people with himself at this ordinance; for it is a blessed love-feast, wherein he treats his people as his friends and intimates.

Q. But may it not be thought presumption, or want of due reverence in sinful man, to adventure to sit at Christ's holy Table?

A. 1. It is far greater presumption in sinful man to think to amend or alter Christ's wise and holy institution for the better; or to pretend to be wiser, holier, or humbler than the apostles and primitive church who used this posture; or to accuse them of indecency and irreverence. 2. It is no presumption in sinful men to receive that honour which their Lord and Saviour puts upon them: or to use that holy familiarity with him, which he allows them: for the disciples were sinful men as well as others, and yet they sat with their Lord and Master, at the first communion, and continued afterwards so to do.

Q. Why may not the reverent and humble posture of kneeling be admitted at the Lord's Table?

A. 1. It cannot, because of the reasons above-mentioned; for we must not be wise above what is written, or think to please God by our inventions in his worship. 2. It is of a Popish original, for Pope Honorius II was the first that ordained this posture of kneeling, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; and that as a native consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had been decreed some time before by his predecessor, Pope Innocent III. We ought not to symbolize with Papists in their errors. 3. There is too much ground to suspect this practice of idolatry, or having a tendency that way. For, (1) The Papists by this posture, do professedly worship the sacramental bread believing it to be Christ's real body; and plainly say, that if they believed not this, they would neither worship it, nor kneel in receiving it. (2) Our kneeling before the elements, and that out of reverence and respect to them, in an act of worshipping God or Christ, seems to say, that we worship God or Christ in or by the use of them: now these elements being consecrated creatures, of purpose placed before us, to be an image and representation of Christ to us, it has too great appearance of evil, to use an outward posture of adoration before them: especially seeing this is not done in the other sacrament, viz. that of baptism.

Q. Do not many who use this posture, profess they have no design of worshipping the bread as the Papists do, and consequently are not to be suspected of idolatry?

A. 1. Though they have no such design, yet still they do a thing that hath a dangerous tendency, and an appearance of evil, which we are expressly commanded to shun. 2. A good intention will not excuse an idolatrous action; the Israelites pretended not to worship the golden calf, but Jehovah before it, and yet that did not excuse their sin.

To be continued

THE MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS

Malcolm H. Watts

“We must not entertain a doubt, that these things which are written in the Psalms are to be understood by the light of the Gospel; and that by whomsoever the Holy Spirit there utters his words, they are to be referred to the Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, his Incarnation, Passion, and Kingdom, and to the Glory of our Resurrection” (Hilary).

“David’s complaints against his enemies are Messiah’s complaints, first, of the unbelieving Jews, then of the heathen persecutors, and the apostate faction in later ages. David’s afflictions are the Messiah’s sufferings. David’s penitential supplications are the supplications of Messiah in agony, under the burden of the imputed guilt of man. David’s songs of triumph and thanksgiving are Messiah’s songs of triumph and thanksgiving, for his victory over sin, and death, and hell. In a word, there is not a page in the book of Psalms in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him.” (Bishop Samuel Horsley)

This is not generally appreciated. Many evangelicals only regard as ‘Messianic’ those which are, in the *most obvious sense*, predictions of Christ (e.g. Psalms 2, 16, 22, 45, 72, 110). It is therefore vital for us to establish some principles for a more consistent interpretation.

(1) David was a prophet (Acts 2:30; cf. 2 Chronicles 29:30 – ‘the words of David, and of Asaph the seer’) and, as such, the Spirit of Christ was in him, testifying to ‘the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow’ (1 Peter 1:11). It was, then, the divine Son, through the Spirit, who foretold his own sufferings and glories in the Psalms (cf. Revelation 19:10 - ‘the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy’, which means that the design of all prophecy is to bear witness to Christ).

(2) The Psalms, with great propriety, may be called ‘the word of Christ’. As a means of letting ‘the word of Christ dwell in [them] richly in all wisdom’, Paul directs believers to the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

(Colossians 3.16). In the Psalms, therefore, we have the prophetic ‘utterances’ of Christ.

(3) Christ Himself declared that the Psalms applied to Him: ‘All things must be fulfilled, which were written... in the psalms, concerning me’ (Luke 24:44). And the apostles assumed that Christ was speaking in them: ‘David speaketh concerning HIM... thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption... He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ’ (Acts 2:25, 27, 31).

(4) The entire collection is known as ‘The Psalms of David’, ‘the Beloved’; and so, according to the principle of typology, the entire collection belongs to Christ because David is the prophetic name for Christ: ‘They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them’ (Jeremiah 30:9; see also: Ezekiel 34:23f, 37:24; Hosea 3:5), and Christ, of course, is called in various Scriptures ‘the Beloved’ (Matthew 3:17; Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 1:13 margin).

(5) Christ was ‘the Man’ (John 19:5), who took of the substance of the Virgin Mary and became fully human, in body and in soul (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:16). As ‘the Son of Man’, he summed up humanity, gathering into himself all truly human experience (without, of course, personal sin). Hence he is ‘the man’ of the Psalms (Psalm 1:1), and, as such, he was able to sing them while here upon the earth.

(6) A union exists between Christ and his people, and they are so united as to be regarded as one: ‘As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ’. (1 Corinthians 12:12 Note: So closely united are they to him that they are called by the same name). As a result of this union, the same things apply to both, and so the Psalms express his thoughts, as well as ours.

(7) Our Lord’s spiritual life was nourished by the Psalms. He was tempted by a quotation from the Psalms. (Luke 4:9ff); he cited Psalm 69:9 when cleansing the Temple; he used the wording of Psalm 62:12 in his warning of judgement (Matthew 16:27); he answered a charge of blasphemy by appealing to Psalm 82:6 (John 10:34); he referred the complaining Pharisees to Psalm 8:2 (Matthew 21:17); he questioned the Scribes with Psalm 110:1 (Luke 20:42); he uttered solemn words of banishment from Psalm 6:8 (Matthew 25:41); he

explained Judas' defection by Psalm 41:9 (John 13:18); he mentioned Psalm 35:19 when referring to the world's hatred (John 15:25); and he alluded to Psalm 109:8 in reference to the betrayer (John 17:12). In fact, four out of the seven words from the cross either quote or fulfil verses in the Psalms: 'My God...' (Psalm 22:1); 'I thirst...' (69:21); 'It is finished...' (22:31); 'Into thy hands...' (31:5). And as our Lord Jesus Christ joined in the worship of God's house, he used the words of the Psalms and they expressed His own inmost feelings. He sang them with his disciples (Matthew 26:30).

The Messianic interpretation was long ago received by the Rabbis, and the Early Church Fathers treated the whole Psalter as Messianic. Augustine's method of expounding them was to interpret each psalm: (1) of Christ the Head; (2) of the Christian Church; and (3) of the private Christian.

Writers speak of the different kinds of Messianic psalms – prophetic, typical, typico-prophetic, indirectly eschatological, and eschatological Jehovic! However, all that is really necessary is to see Christ in each and every one of them.

'There is one view of Christ – and that not the least important to the tired and troubled believer – that can be discovered only in the book of Psalms – I mean his inward life. No eyewitness of the outward man – though an inspired evangelist – could penetrate the heart. But the Spirit "who searcheth the secret things of God" has, in the Psalms, laid open the inmost thoughts, sorrows and conflicts of our Lord. The evangelists faithfully and intelligently depict the sinless Man; the Psalms alone lay open the heart of "the Man of sorrows"' (Dr. Henry Cooke).

Once we discern the Son of God in the Psalms, we shall be helped in our understanding of some of the more difficult passages, such as fall into the following two categories:

1. Assertions of innocence

'Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me' (Psalm 7:8); 'The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me' (18:20). Such words can apply to God's people, in that they have righteousness imputed to them, they are given a new heart and a new spirit, they know honesty of intention and general uprightness of purpose, they live

obedient lives (otherwise than the wicked), and they are innocent of many of the faults laid to their charge (Ps 7:3; 18:21). But, of course, these words are uniquely true of Christ, the righteous One (Acts 3:14; 1 John 2:1).

2. Terrible imprecations

'Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha' (Psalm 40:14-15).

'Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them ...' (Psalm 69:22-24). This kind of language is not altogether inappropriate for the believer, since it declares God's verdict upon those who reject his mercy and who persecute his people and these imprecations are really the outpourings of a heart provoked by evil, righteously indignant, and zealous for righteousness (Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:26).

Ought we not to denounce wrong? Undoubtedly. Our duty is to pray for the triumph of God's rule, even if it involves the destruction of those who persist in wickedness (Psalm 7:12, cf. 104:35). Let it be remembered, however, that these denunciations may become impressive warnings which, through God's mercy, might yet prove to be to the spiritual good of sinners (Acts 8:20). But if not, we know that the ultimate end of such indictments must be God's glory, the persons contemplated in them being hostile to God and opposed to his holy Law. Referring to such imprecatory psalms, Dr. William Binnie wrote, 'Certainly they ought never to be sung but with fear and trembling. Nevertheless at fit seasons they may and ought to find a place in our service of praise.'

True as this is, however, it is also true that if Christ is heard speaking in these psalms, the words are entirely appropriate, it being perfectly right for him as Judge to pronounce doom upon the wicked (Mark 3:5; Matthew 11:20; 23:38 cf. Psalm 69:25; John 2:17 cf. Psalm 69:9).

Confessions of sin?

The Messianic interpretation does raise one problem: the confessions of sin in the Psalter: e.g. 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me' (Psalm 40:12) - and this confession is found in a psalm evidently Messianic - 40:6-8, cf. Hebrews 10:5-7.

Some theologians refuse to recognise these as Christ's words, arguing 'Christ was one with us, sin apart' which, of course, is absolutely true (Hebrews 7:26), and it is also true to say that it is in the very nature of a type to be somewhat imperfect (7:19). However, to reject such verses as in any way 'Messianic' is not really satisfactory and inevitably leads to problems in interpretation. It is best to remember that our Lord's Representative Headship required that the sins of men were 'imputed' to him (Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24), so that there was a real sense in which he felt the burden of them upon his soul (Matthew 26:37; John 1:29) and, of course, he suffered throughout his life the punishment due to them (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 3:18). Furthermore, as our great High Priest, a vital part of his ministry was to 'confess' his people's 'sins' in order to secure pardon for them (Leviticus 16:21; Isaiah 53:12).

Examples of Messianic interpretation:

Psalm 1 The Saviour and Sin (v. 1); the Saviour and Law (v. 2); and the Saviour and God (v. 3).

Psalm 2 The Voice of God the Father (vv. 4-6); the Voice of God the Son (vv. 7-9 – Prophet, Priest and King); and the Voice of God the Holy Spirit (vv. 10-12).

Psalm 3 Our Lord's Suffering (vv. 1-2); His Glory (vv. 3-5); and His Hope (vv. 6-7).

Psalm 5 Christ's Relationship with the Father (vv. 1-7); His Relationship with the World (vv.8-10); and His Relationship with the Church (vv. 11-12).

Psalm 7 Christ's Life (vv. 1-2); Death (vv. 3-5); Prayer (vv. 6-10); Betrayal (vv. 11-16); and Joy (v. 17).

Psalm 14 Our Lord speaks of Sin (vv. 1-3); Judgment (vv. 4-6); and Salvation (v. 7).

Psalm 15 Wonderfully Enthroned in Glory (v.1); Deservedly Enthroned in Glory (vv. 2-5a); and Immovably Enthroned in Glory (v. 5b).

Psalm 16 Christ's Contract (vv. 1-3); His Service (vv. 4-8); and His Reward (vv. 9-11).

Psalm 18 The Saviour's Death (vv. 4-6); Resurrection (vv. 7-18); Ascension (vv. 19-24); Kingdom (vv. 25-45) – enemies (vv. 37-43), subjects (vv. 43-45); and Success (vv. 46-50).

Psalm 21 The King (vv. 1-4); the Reign (vv. 5-12); and the Triumph (v. 13).

Psalm 22 Sorrow (vv. 1-10); Petition (vv. 11-21); and Thanksgiving (vv. 22-31).

Psalm 28 Christ's Humiliation (vv. 1-5); and Christ's Exaltation (vv. 6-9).

Psalm 31 Darkness (vv. 1-8); Dawn (vv. 9-18); and Day (vv. 19-24).

Psalm 38 The Lord's Distress (vv. 1-8); Prayer (vv. 9-14); and Hope (vv. 15-22).

Psalm 41 His Life (vv. 1-6); Death (vv. 7-9); Resurrection (vv. 10,11); and Ascension (vv. 12-13).

Psalm 88 Death (vv. 1-9); and Resurrection (vv. 10-13).

Psalm 89 The God of the Covenant (vv. 1-14); The People of the Covenant (vv. 15-18); and The Mediator of the Covenant (vv. 19-52) - promises made to Christ (vv. 21-29); promises made to His people (vv. 30-37).

Psalm 109 The Treachery and Condemnation of Judas (vv. 6-20); and the Suffering and Vindication of Jesus (vv. 21-31).

Psalm 118 The Scene on Earth (vv. 5-18) – men (vv. 10-17); God (v. 18); and the Scene in Heaven (vv. 19-24).

Psalm 150 Praise in the Church (v.1); Praise for His Glorious Achievements (v. 2); and Praise with All our Ransomed Powers (vv. 3-6).

Groupings of Psalms: If we take account of the five-fold division of the Psalter, we shall find that there is a particular Messianic emphasis in each book:

Book 1 (Psalms 1-41) – Christ's Humiliation

Book 2 (Psalms 42-72) – His Exaltation

Book 3 (Psalms 73-89) – The Rejection of Israel and the Establishment of the Christian Church

Book 4 (Psalms 90-106) – His Mediatorial Reign

Book 5 (Psalms 107-150) - Our Lord's Heavenly Glory

Also, when the Psalter is viewed Messianically, certain psalms will group together: e.g. Psalms 1-3 – life, death, resurrection; 22-24 – death, resurrection, and ascension; 108-110 – Seeking a people, He is neglected by Jews and accepted by Christian believers. Consider also the 'Passion Psalms': 22, 25, 41, 55, 69, 109; and the 'Royal Psalms': 2, 18, 20, 45, 61, 72, 110.

SPIRITUAL RICHES FROM THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

(1600-1661)

Oh what wisdom is it to believe, and not to dispute; to subject the thoughts to His court, and not to repine to any act of His justice? He hath done it: all flesh be silent!

It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if ye stay your thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes; as, "Oh the place!" "Oh the time!" "Oh if this had been, this had not followed!" Oh the linking of this accident with this time and place!

Look up to the master-motion and the first wheel. See and read the decree of Heaven and the Creator of man... "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

[Letter 297 – To the Lady Fingask]

If contentment were here, heaven were not heaven. Whoever seeks the world to be their bed, shall at best find it short and ill-made, and a stone under their side to hold them waking, rather than a soft pillow to sleep upon.

Ye ought to bless your Lord that it is not worse. We live in a sea where many have suffered shipwreck, and have need that Christ sit at the helm of the ship. It is a mercy to win to heaven, though with much hard toil and heavy labour and to take it by violence, ill and well as it may be.

Better to go swimming and wet though our waters than drown by the way.

[Letter 56 – To my Lady Kenmure]

I was indeed sorrowful at my departure from you, especially since ye were in such heaviness after your daughter's death. Yet I do persuade myself, ye know that the weightiest end of the cross of Christ that is laid upon you lieth upon your strong Saviour; for Isaiah saith, "In all your afflictions He is afflicted" (Isa. 63:9). O blessed Saviour who suffereth with you! And glad may your soul be even to walk in the fiery furnace with one like unto the Son of Man who is also the Son of God.

Courage! up your heart! When ye do tire, He will bear both you and your burden (Ps. 55:22).

Yet a little while and ye shall see the salvation of God.

[Letter 2 – To a Christian Gentlewoman]

Be sure that you take Christ Himself, and take Him with His Father's blessing: His Father alloweth Him well upon you. Your lines are well fallen; it could not have been better, nor so well with you, if they had not fallen in these places.

In heaven, or out of heaven, there is nothing better, nothing so sweet and excellent as the thing ye have lighted on; and therefore hold you with Christ.

Joy, much joy may ye have of Him: but take His cross with Himself cheerfully. Christ and His cross are not separable in this life; howbeit Christ and His cross part at heaven's door, for there is not houseroom for crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble, cannot find lodging there: they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus down in this wide inn, and stormy country, on this side of death.

[Letter 242 – To the Lady Rowellan]

He hath won the heart of my soul. Christ is even become a new Christ to me, and His love greener than it was. And now I strive no more with Him: His love shall carry it away. I lay down myself under His love.

I desire to sing, and to cry, and to proclaim myself, even under the water, in His common (under obligation to Him), and eternally indebted to His kindness. I will not offer to quit commons with Him (as we used to say), for that will not be. All, all for evermore to be Christ's!

What further trials are before me, I know not, but I know that Christ will have a saved soul of me, over on the other side of the water, on the yonder side of crosses, and beyond men's wrongs.

[Letter 214 – To Mr. James Hamilton]

He hath in patience waited on, until I be come to myself, and hath not taken advantage of my weak apprehensions of His goodness. Great and holy is His name! He looketh to what I desire to be, and not to what I am...

Oh, what I owe to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus!
Who hath now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is, that goeth through
His mill, and His oven, to be made bread for His own table.

Grace tried is better than grace, and it is more than grace; it is glory in its
infancy.

[Letter 76 – To Robert Gordon of Knockbren]

I find my Lord Jesus cometh not in that precise way that I lay wait for Him; He
hath a gate of His own.

Oh, how high are His ways above my ways! I see but little of Him. It is best not
to offer to learn (teach) Him a lesson, but to give him absolutely His own will,
in coming, going, ebbing, flowing, and in the manner of His gracious working.
I want nothing but a back-burden of Christ's love. I would go through hell, and
the thick of the damned devils, to have a hearty feast of Christ's love; for he
hath fettered me with His love, and run away, and left me a chained man.

[Letter 222 – To my Lady Culross]

I know that Christ compassionateth you...under your downcastings, but it is
good for you that He hideth Himself sometimes.

It is not niceness, dryness, nor coldness of love, that causeth Christ to
withdraw, and slip under a curtain and a veil, that ye cannot see Him; but He
knoweth that ye could not bear with upsails, a fair gale, a full moon, and a high
spring-tide of His felt love, and always a fair summer-day and a summer sun
of a felt, and possessed and embracing Lord Jesus. His kisses and His visits
to His dearest ones are thin-sown. He could not let out His rivers of love upon
His own, but these rivers would be in hazard of loosening a young plant at the
root; and He knoweth this of you.

Ye should, therefore, frist (postpone possession of) Christ's kindness, as to its
sensible and full manifestations, till ye and He be above sun and moon. That
is the country where ye will be enlarged for that love which ye do not now
contain.

[Letter 187 – To the Lady Gaitgirth]

Certainly, what came down enacted and concluded in the great book before the throne, and signed and subscribed by the hand which never did wrong, should be kissed and adored by us.

We see God's decrees when they bring forth their fruits, all actions, good and ill, sweet and sour, in their time; but we see not presently the after-birth of God's decree, namely His blessed end, and the good that He bringeth out of the womb and His holy and spotless counsel. We see His working, and we sorrow; the end of His counsel and working lieth hidden, and underneath the ground, and therefore we cannot believe...We see red earth, unbroken clods, furrows and stones; but we see not summer, lilies, roses, the beauty of a garden.

If ye give the Lord time to work (you need this advice, as too often believers make haste), His end is under the ground, and ye shall see it was (for) your good.

[Letter 311 – To Barbara Hamilton]

All is night that is here, in respect of ignorance and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth; and therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the Coming of the Son of Man, when the shadows shall flee away.

Persuade yourself the King is coming; read His letter sent before Him, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. 3:11).

Wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that ye have not a morrow.

[Letter 4 – To my Lady Kenmure]