

## CONTENTS

Letter from the Pastor	2
Fellowship News	5
Salisbury Conference 2024	7
Can You Name Me?	10
Think as you go on your way	12
Be Ready For What Awaits You	12
Thy Kingdom Come	13
The Second Coming	14
Christ Stands Before the Mountain of Election	18
Seven Gracious Invitations	20
He Died For Us	21
The Outpouring of the Spirit of God	22
Earnest, Passionate Preaching	23
Direct Appeal to Individuals	24
The Testimony of Lieutenant General Sir William Dobbie	26
The Greatest Discovery of All	26
The Christian's Sure and Certain Hope	27
Epilogue	27

# LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

## Our Treasure

*“The fear of the LORD is his treasure” Isaiah 33:6*

Next to the Lord Himself, godly fear is the most precious thing we have. In this verse it is called “treasure,” because it is a grace that is rare, beautiful, and lasting.

### **1. What this is *not***

“The fear of the LORD” is not being frightened of God. “Servile fear” belongs to unbelievers. They know just enough of God not to be indifferent to Him (Romans 2:14-16; Hebrews 10:27). However, they try to reassure themselves that He is not real, and bolster each other against the claims of Christ. On the one hand they live in denial; on the other, any thought of God disturbs them. It is no better than that of the devils, who “believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

It is true that this kind of fear *can* be in the Lord’s people as well. Remaining sin in us sometimes surfaces in flawed views of God and His fatherly love (Matthew 6:7,8). We struggle with a keen sense of sin instead of rejoicing in pardon and adoption (Romans 8:15,16). And we can fail to have confidence in His “perfect love [which] casteth out fear” (1 John 4:17,18). God’s gracious Word, through the applicatory blessing of the Spirit, keeps us free from this: “whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Proverbs 1:33).

### **2. This is *godly* fear**

“The fear of the LORD.” It is a treasure that only His children have – sometimes called “filial fear.” Following from Matthew 6:7,8 quoted above, comes the Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father which art in heaven, *Hallowed be thy name ... thy will be done in earth*, as it is in heaven” (verses 9,10, emphasis mine). This tells us that filial fear is childlike reverence leading to cheerful obedience (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

### **3. This godly fear involves precious things**

#### **a) A constant awareness of His presence**

Like Hagar, we say, “Thou God seest me” (Genesis 16:13). And under that sense of His holy and loving presence, if grace is in us, we want to live to

please Him. He sees and knows everything, and this moves us to pray, in the words of the Anglican Collect,

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **b) A tender conscience**

This keeps us sensitive to what pleases or displeases the Lord: “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil” (Proverbs 8:13). We hate what our God hates and love what He loves. This develops as we go on in Christian experience. We look back to certain things we used to do which, upon deeper acquaintance with God, we no longer believe are right. We now take even “the little foxes that spoil the vines” (Song of Solomon 2:15) because we have a heightened sense of what pleases our Father.

It also means whenever we believe we have sinned, we at once confess it to the Lord in a telegraph prayer. We do not let “latest sins” build up but keep “short accounts” with God to keep right with Him. We cannot bear that anything should come between the Lord and us, like a dark cloud obscuring the sunshine of His felt presence. And if it does, we thank God for the golden promise, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). And far from making us presumptuous, such gratitude for pardon will only enhance this fear: “But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Psalm 130:4).

### **c) A preserving grace**

Joseph showed it when refusing Potiphar’s wife’s approach: “thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). To sin against the Lord who was with him, showing such love and blessing, becomes unthinkable. He does not speak of “dare not,” which would be servile; but “cannot” which is filial. Joseph Hart captures it,

*This fear’s the spirit of faith,  
A confidence that’s strong;  
An unctuous light to all that’s right,  
And a bar to all that’s wrong.*

The same grace that won our hearts also *keeps* our hearts.

#### **d) We pray**

Job's friends alleged, "thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God" (Job 15:4). Although they were wrong about Job, they were right that fearing God and praying to God go together. Godly fear promotes prayer. The holy sense of God upon our souls draws us out to Him because faith sees Him *there*. Being accessible, by the Spirit's help (Romans 8:26), we keep in a prayerful frame and make our requests known. As we do this, He promises that, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them" (Psalm 145:19). Notice that it is our "desire" – whatever answer comes, even if not the one we ask for, it *satisfies*. As Joseph Hall wrote, "Good prayers never come weeping home. I am sure I shall receive, either what I ask or what I *should* ask."

#### **e) It means devoted worship and service**

"Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). We will take any service for God seriously and not do it "negligently" (Jeremiah 48:10, margin). This includes the way we worship Him, knowing that it is for His acceptance and glory before anything else. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of reverence.

Let John Needham (d.1786) summarise all this:

*Happy beyond description he  
Who fears the Lord his God;  
Who hears His threats with holy awe,  
And trembles at His rod.*

*Fear, sacred passion, ever dwells  
With its fair partner, love;  
Blending their beauties, both proclaim  
Their source is from above.*

*Let fear and love, most holy God,  
Possess this soul of mine;  
Then shall I worship Thee aright,  
And taste Thy joys divine.*

With Christian love,  
*John Thackway*

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Daniel Tribe

Saturday 7 September saw our first Youth Conference take place. We warmly welcomed friends who joined us for a blessed and profitable day of ministry and fellowship. The Conference sought to cover the overall theme of 'Relationships'. Our first session dealt with the subject '*Relationship with Christ*', when we were reminded of our own personal walk with the Lord and the need to cultivate a godly, upright life. As is often the way at conferences, the times of fellowship can be just as blessed to us as the ministry, so during the lunch break which followed, there was time to get to know one another over food and some casual games of table tennis and air hockey. For the second session, our Pastor (Rev John Thackway), gave very practical, helpful, and biblical ministry on the subject of '*Relationship with others*'. Given the spiritual darkness of the days in which we live, it was refreshing and encouraging to be pointed to the eternal truth of God's inspired Word. After a short break, Tom Wheatley (Elder & youth work leader), spoke upon the subject of our '*Relationship with the world*'. With challenge and encouragement, Tom showed from Scripture the believers' responsibility to Christ as they walk through this sinful world. We are full of thanks to the Lord for His evident blessing upon our first Youth Conference. For the Holy Spirit's influence upon the ministry, with the three sessions complimenting each other so well. For the good spirit of fellowship which was enjoyed by all. And for the opportunity to set Christ before the young people who gathered. Recordings of all three sessions are available on our website and YouTube channel. Please join us in praying for the Lord's leading as we seek to plan a second Youth Conference for next year.

*"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."* (Ps. 145:4)

It was an afternoon of mixed emotions on Tuesday 24 September, when we gathered together to share a tea with our dear sister Joy W, and to send her onward with our love and prayers as she moves to Gloucestershire to be nearer to her daughter. Both Joy, and her late husband Tom, have stood as great examples to us of constant, faithful, Christ-like service over their many years of membership here at Emmanuel. While we will, certainly, miss our

sister in Christ, we thank the Lord that she is moving somewhere where she will be lovingly and appropriately cared for, nearer to her dear family.

We are incredibly grateful to the Lord for recently granting us an opportunity to share the gospel with a group of pupils from a local primary school. The RE teacher had contacted our Pastor to ask if they could bring the children to our church, to look around and to learn about our beliefs and practices in worship. So on Wednesday 25 September, we gladly opened the church doors to welcome approximately 30 students. Our Pastor and our Ministerial Assistant (Dan Tribe) were able to speak of the importance of the Word of God as evidenced by the central raised pulpit, to show them the baptistery and explain the significance of believer's baptism, to talk of the Lord's supper and the sacrifice of Christ which that sacrament beautifully pictures, and to define the terms 'evangelical' and 'reformed'. Needless to say, the time was full of short yet clear gospel opportunities, which we trust the Lord will use in His time, to His glory.

The Lord wonderfully provided another gospel opportunity by way of an invitation given to our brother, Ron M, to speak at a Harvest Thanksgiving service in the local care home. The service at the home was held on Monday 30 September, and Ron was enabled to speak well from the Saviour's Words, "*I am the bread of life*" (John 6:35). It is no small encouragement to see the way the Lord is increasing our witness within the care homes, and we continue to pray that the Lord will bless these efforts to the saving of precious souls.

Early October was a busy time for the Bible League Trust with deputation meetings held in Barnstaple and Cheltenham. Our Pastor, as editor of the Bible League Quarterly, travelled to Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church on Tuesday 1 October. And on Wednesday 9 October, our Ministerial Assistant – a newly appointed trustee – spoke at Providence Baptist Chapel, Cheltenham. We are thankful to the Lord for the support at both of these meetings, and we pray that the literature taken will prove helpful and edifying to many of the Lord's people.

On Friday 11 and Saturday 12 October the Salisbury Reformed Seminary held Open Days, when supporters and those interested in the course could come and join with the students for lectures. The Friday was a special visit from Professor Andy McIntosh, who spoke on subjects including: '*How Science grew out of the Reformation*', '*Why Creation is Theologically Important*', and '*How True Science Points to the God of the Bible*'. Please join us in praying

that the Lord will raise up labourers to study at the Seminary and to be sent forth into His harvest.

On Lord's Day 27 October, we rejoiced to open the baptistry for Cerys and Alicia, who were baptised on profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. We pray the Lord will grant both Cerys and Alicia to be filled with all joy and peace in believing, and that He will be highly exalted in their lives. Lord willing, their testimonies will be recorded in the next edition of *The Messenger*.

## **SALISBURY CONFERENCE 2024**

The 25th Salisbury Conference began on Friday 4 October with visiting preacher, Dr Jeffrey T Riddle, Pastor of Christ Reformed Baptist Church, Louisa, Virginia USA, speaking upon the theme "*Experiencing the Word of God*". Dr Riddle also took the services on the Sabbath including the After Church Fellowship when he shared with us his testimony to God's saving grace. A very encouraging number of people were present at all the sessions when visitors from various parts of the country gathered to join with us. It was also encouraging to have a number of ministers present following their Fraternal Meeting at Grove House.

The first session began with the singing of the 65th Psalm: '*Praise waits for thee in Sion, Lord*'. Dr Riddle then gave a moving and profound account of '*The Life and Legacy of Adoniram Judson (1788-1850)*.' Setting things in order, Dr Riddle read from Romans 15: 20-21: '*Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.*' This was a pivotal scripture, setting the scene for the biographical account.

Adoniram Judson was among the very first American foreign missionaries; and Dr Riddle looked at the missionary's life in three parts: beginning with his birth, in 1788, and proceeding with his early life to the year 1812, with his early life, conversion, and call to the ministry (particularly into cross-cultural ministry as a missionary). Then, secondly, we were informed of the establishment of the missionary work in Burma from 1812 to 1826. And thirdly, and finally, some

account was given of his mature ministry and his eventual role as a missionary statesman.

Adoniram Judson paid a heavy price for his faithfulness in maintaining a close walk with the Lord: the loss of two wives (his third outliving him), loss of children, breakdown of health, and imprisonment; yet after such bitter hardships, we heard how his labours proved to be far from in vain. (*1 Cor 15:58*).

By the time of his death, the Bible had been translated into Burmese. Myanmar as the country is now called has the third largest number of Baptists in the world, a legacy which may be attributed to the faithful labours of Adoniram Judson. Dr Riddle spoke of a subsequent period of deputation meetings which Adoniram took back in his homeland. It is said that many were somewhat disappointed when they heard him speak. They wanted to hear exotic tales from a far-away land, but his message was not of his struggles and trials, but it concerned the simple gospel messages that he had preached back in Burma. *'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. He was buried. He rose again the third day according to the scriptures. He was seen of Cephas and the Twelve'*.

Adoniram's wife, Emily, tried to explain to her husband what his American audiences wanted: *'But dear, they want something different. They want a story'*. *'Well'*, Adoniram replied, *'I am sure I gave them a story, the most thrilling one that can be conceived of'*. But they had heard it before, his wife patiently explained. They wanted something new from a man who had just come from the Antipodes. He responded by saying, *'I am glad they have it to say that a man coming from the Antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of Jesus's dying love'*. Making particular application at this point to gospel ministers in the congregation, Dr Riddle said, *'Wherever we go, near or far, in our home cultures or abroad, we have no better story to tell than the old story of the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's our story. Amen'*.

The Saturday sessions began with the doctrine of *"The Preservation of Scripture"*. Preaching from Jeremiah 36, Dr Riddle declared at the outset of this session that the preservation of Scripture is a foundational doctrine, given special emphasis in the classic Protestant Confessions of Faith. He said: *'Sadly, however, in the modern era, many persons who would take the label of being 'conservative evangelical', even 'reformed', would say, we affirm the*



*doctrine of inspiration; We will fight for the doctrine of inspiration. But what is neglected is the doctrine of preservation'. Today it seems this truth is either abandoned or redefined. Developing his case, Dr Riddle quoted such scriptures as Psalm 12:6-7: 'The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.'* As well as Psalm 119:89 & Isaiah 40:8.

Starting with Jeremiah's commission from God to write down His words, Dr Riddle noted the wicked resistance to the truth and the attempt to destroy the record, but he drew particular attention to the ultimate triumph of God as he upheld His Word and wonderfully preserved it. The application was direct and challenging. Is neglecting to read the word of God as bad as throwing it into the fire like Jehudi? *'Men may try to suppress it. Some might try to hold it down. But God will preserve his Word, no matter how sinful men may endeavour to war against it. The Word of God is indestructible. Let us rest in His provision for us today in all things, including the keeping of His Word pure in all ages for His people'.*

The focus of the second Saturday session was on Zechariah 5. In defining *'The Universality of Scripture'*, Zechariah the prophet's vision of the flying roll (or scroll), representing God's Word, and the standard of His judgement, was carefully considered. Dr Riddle explained that *'the Universality of Scripture'* means that it is ubiquitous, that is, available everywhere, all over the world. This was why it was Adoniram Judson's first work to learn the language, in order to translate the Bible. The roll was seen in the vision as flying, and so reaching the many and various groups of God's people. Where His Word is not, there is mission; and where there is mission, there is the translation of the Scriptures. Thus, God's Word is *'a flying roll'*.

In the closing session, to underline the Conference theme, Dr Riddle spoke of *'The Goal of Scripture'*, John 20:30-31: The absolute necessity of conversion, through believing God's Word, and believing, we have life, John 20:31. It is imperative that we reverence God's Word, that it may guide us in all things - in our churches, our homes, our hearts and minds, that we may experience the blessing and influence of God. Therefore, *'the Goal of Scripture'* is to bring men from every nation, tribe, and tongue, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and through believing, to find life through His name.

The Sabbath Day brought further blessing to us through Dr Riddle's faithful ministry; and, at the After Church Meeting, we were privileged to hear Dr Riddle's testimony concerning God's gracious dealings with him, from his youth, leading him eventually into the Christian Ministry.

From the beginning to the end, the conference was a time of exceptional blessing.

*God willing, next year's Salisbury Conference will be held the weekend of 3-5 October, when we hope to welcome as our guest speaker, Rev Colin Mercer, Minister of Omagh Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.*

## **CAN YOU NAME ME?**

**Tom M. Olson**

I never was guilty of wrong action. But on my account lives have been lost, trains have been wrecked, ships have gone down at sea, cities have burnt, battles have been lost, and governments have failed.

I never struck a blow, nor spoke an unkind word, but because of me homes have been broken up, friends have grown cold, the laughter of children has ceased, wives have shed bitter tears, brothers and sisters have been forgotten, and fathers and mothers have gone broken-hearted to their graves.

I have intended no evil, but because of me, talent and genius have come to naught, courtesy and kindness have failed, and the promise of success and happiness has yielded sorrow and disaster.

I have no colour except black, no sound but just my silence, no cause for being myself, and no progeny except grief and disaster.

You may not in the instant call me by name, but surely you are not personally unacquainted with me. I am NEGLECT.

In addition to all the above things, I confess that I am causing you to refrain from activity in the most important thing in your life – the salvation of your precious soul.

The Lord Jesus Christ finished the work necessary for our salvation on Calvary's Cross. Judgment was poured out upon Him. His precious blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins. He has been raised from among the dead, and is now seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens.

You have heard the gospel message over and over again. Even now the Saviour's invitation- "Come unto me" – is ringing in your ears. You never intended to be eternally lost. You expect to be saved some day, and you entertain a hope of being with and like the Saviour for all eternity. But I am holding you back. I am preventing you from deciding to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. If I continue to do so until the Messenger of Death calls you, it will be forever too late for you to be saved. You will perish.

It remains to be seen whether or not you are going to break the hold which I have upon you. After hearing my honest confession, and listening to my faithful warning, are you going to remain negligent? There is one way in which I may be overcome; and this is by immediate and definite action. This is your great opportunity. Act now!

*"How shall we escape if we NEGLECT so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him...?" (Hebrews 2:3)*

*"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Proverbs 27:1)*

*"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2)*

*"Choose you this day." (Joshua 24:15)*

## **THINK AS YOU GO ON YOUR WAY**

**Youth:** Too happy to think, plenty of time left yet.

**Adulthood:** Too busy to think, seeking wealth and pleasure.

**Prime of Life:** Too anxious to think, worry has come threatening to take over.

**Declining Years:** Too old to think. Life has been wasted and hearts have become harder.

**The Death-Bed:** Too ill to think, so very weak and facing the great unknown.

**Death:** Too late to think, the gospel is no longer heard. The Spirit has withdrawn. Tragically the opportunity has been lost.

**Eternity:** For ever to think, God's mercy has passed. Our souls are facing Divine Judgment on the brink of discovering our destiny and our destination. Time now only to realize how foolish we have been and how lost and wretched we shall be for ever and for ever.

## BE READY FOR WHAT AWAITS YOU

Death is as close as a sudden fall, the bumper of a car, the failure of the engine in the plane, a derailed train plunging down a hillside, a malignant and cancerous cell, the loss of the heart-beat, or the appearance of foreign matter in the blood-stream.

- Death catches many unawares.
- Raffaello Sanzio Raphael, the Italian Painter, died when his last painting was half-finished.
- Sir Walter Scott's last written words were: "Tomorrow, we shall..."
- Franz Schubert left an unfinished symphony.
- Charles Dickens laid down his pen in the middle of his last novel.

All of us should pray the psalmist's prayer: "*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*" (Psalm 90:12)

# THY KINGDOM COME

*An extract from 'The Lord's Prayer', Thomas Watson's exposition of this Prayer, as set forth in the Westminster Shorter Catechism:*

Labour to find that the kingdom of grace is set up in your hearts. While others aspire after earthly kingdoms, labour to have the kingdom of God within you. Luke 17:21. The kingdom of grace must come into us before we can go into the kingdom of glory.

The motives to this are:

(1) The kingdom of God within is our spiritual beauty. The kingdom of grace adorns a person, and sets him off in the eyes of God and of angels. It makes the king's daughter all glorious within' Psalm 45:13. Grace sheds a glory and lustre upon the soul. As a diamond to a ring, so is grace to the soul. A heart beautified with grace has the King of heaven's picture hung in it.

(2) The kingdom of grace set up in the heart is our spiritual defence. Grace is called 'the armour of light.' Romans 13:12. It is light for beauty, and armour for defence. He who has the kingdom of grace within him, is 'strengthened with all might according to (God's) glorious power.' Colossians 1:11. He has the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, and the breast plate of righteousness. His armour can never be shot through. He is fortified against the assaults of temptation and the terrors of hell.

(3) The kingdom of grace set up in the heart brings peace with it. 'The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace.' Romans 14:17. There is a secret peace proceeding from holiness. Peace is the best blessing of a kingdom [*'One peace is better than a thousand victories'*]. The kingdom of grace is a kingdom of peace. Grace is the root, peace is the flower that grows out of it. It is '*peace in a storm*', such peace that no worldly affliction can shake. The doors of Solomon's temple were made of olive tree, carved with open flowers; so, in a gracious heart, is the olive of peace, and the open flowers of joy. 1 Kings 6:32.

(4) The kingdom of grace enriches the soul. A kingdom has its riches. A believer is said to be rich in faith. James 2:5. How rich is he that has God for his God, who is heir to all the promises! Hebrews 6:17. A man may be rich in bills and bonds, but a believer may say as Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none'

(Acts 3:6); 'yet I am rich in bills and bonds, an heir to all God's promises'; and to be heir to the promises, is better than to be heir to the crown.

(5) When the kingdom of grace comes, it fixes and establishes the heart. 'O God, my heart is fixed.' Psalm 57:7. Before the kingdom of grace comes, the heart is very unfixed and unsettled; like a ship without ballast, like quicksilver that cannot be made to fix: but when the kingdom of grace comes, it fixes the heart on God; and when the heart is fixed, it rests quiet as in its centre.

(6) The kingdom of grace is distinguishing. It is a sure pledge of God's love. God may give kingdoms in anger; but wherever the kingdom of grace is set up, it is in love. He cannot give grace in anger. The crown always goes with the kingdom; let us therefore be ambitious of the kingdom of grace.

*Submitted by Caty O*

## **THE SECOND COMING**

**Malcolm Watts**

*The summary of a lecture given at the Salisbury Reformed Seminary*

As Christians, our great hope is the personal and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). The Saviour Himself promised that He would one day come again (Jn. 14:3; Rev. 22:7,12,20), and He repeatedly referred to this great future event (Matt. 24:29,30; 25:6,13; Lk. 19:13; Jn. 21:22), even after He had returned to His Father in Heaven (Rev. 22:12).

His people have always cherished the thought and prospect of seeing Him again (2 Tim. 4:8), ever looking for the accomplishment of His Word and the realization of their hope (Titus 2:13; Rev. 22:20). Indeed, a watchword in the early church was "Maranatha", an Aramaic word for "Our Lord cometh or is at hand", an expression both of their faith and of their eager longing for the Lord's speedy return (1 Cor. 16:22).

In the New Testament, there are *three words* used with reference to *the same event* - our Lord's *Second Coming*:

- *parousia*, translated “coming”, it literally signifies “becoming present” and “being present” (from *para*, “with”, and *ousia*, a word derived from *eimi*, “to be), therefore denoting “an arrival” and “consequent presence” (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1,8);
- *epiphaneia*, from a root word, “to shine” or “to give light” and therefore “a shining forth”, a reference to the manifestation of His glory (Matt. 24:27; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1,8); and
- *apokalupsis*, denoting “a revelation” or “an appearing” (*apo*, “from” and *kalupto*, “to hide” or “to cover”) (1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:7,13).

A study of the passages relating to this event leads us to the conclusion that His Advent will be:

**I. Physical:** Christ will re-appear, coming as He was - and still is. (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 1:10; 4:16; Heb. 9:26-28)

**II. Visible:** as He went, so shall He return, and men shall see Him descending from heaven. (Matt. 24:30,31; Rev. 1:7)

**III. Glorious:** He will be revealed in great glory, the visible display of the honour and majesty associated with the Father and appertaining to Him as Mediator. (Matt. 16:27; 24:30, 31; Mk. 13:26; Lk 9:26; 21:27)

**IV. Future:** although, in a spiritual way and manner, Christ is with us now (Matt. 18:20; 28:19,20), He is not with us as He will be with us on the auspicious day of His return. (Matt. 24:29,30; I Thess. 4:15-17)

**V. Certain:** “These sayings are faithful and true...Behold I come quickly” (Rev. 22:6,7). Again, He says, “Surely (verily, or truly), I come quickly” (Rev. 22:20). He seals His promise making it absolutely sure to us. (Heb. 10:37)

**VI. Sudden:** when He comes, it will be quickly or suddenly, “as a thief in the night”, when no-one is expecting Him (Matt. 24:42-44; I Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). The cry is heard, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh....” (Matt. 25:6)

**VII. Momentous:** That day will be “the day of Christ”, “the day of the Lord”, when He shall be acknowledged and adored, when His enemies will be

overthrown, His people will be comforted, and His kingdom will be revealed and enjoyed. (Phil. 1:6; 2 Pet. 3:10; cf. Lk. 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2 Tim. 4:1)

Truly, this will be the day of all days, the day of the greatest significance and importance:

- God will be glorified in the execution of His decrees and the fulfilment of His promises (Ps. 50:3-5; Jude 14,15);
- His Son will be both vindicated and honoured (Matt. 26:63,64; Phil. 2:9-11);
- Christ's mediatorial offices will all be performed and carried into full effect (as prophet - Jn. 17:26; as priest – Isa. 53:11; Eph. 5:25-27; and as king (1 Cor. 15:24-26; Rev. 11:15);
- The salvation of His people will then be completed and perfected (Eph. 1:14; 1 Jn. 3:2);
- Our graces will find blessed and ultimate fruition (faith will become sight – Jn. 17:24; love will be satisfied in everlasting communion - 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev.7:16,17; and hope will be realized in perfect happiness - Rom. 5:2; 8:23,24);
- In the greatest of congregations, the Lord's people will be gathered together, never ever to part (2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Thess. 4:16,17; Rev. 7:9,10);
- God will receive honour, glory and never-ceasing praise for His so great salvation (Rev. 19:5-7).

### **Did our Lord know the time of His Second Coming?**

The Scriptures reveal that there are three distinct persons (or distinguishable elements) in the one and undivided Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19,20; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Jn. 5:7; Rev. 1:4-6). Each of these persons share the same essence, being equal in power and glory (Matt. 11:25; Jn. 10:30; Acts 5:3,4).

Certainly, the Son is called "God" (Isa. 9:6; Jer. 23:5,6; Zech. 13:7; Mal. 3:1; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:20), yet as the Son of God, He was chosen and appointed in the eternal purpose to be the Mediator or Peacemaker between



God and sinners of mankind (Prov.8:23; Isa. 42:1; Eph. 3:11; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:5), executing thereby the offices of prophet (Jn. 1:18; Acts 3:22), priest (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6) and king (Lk. 1:33; Ps. 2:6).

In order to fulfil this divine purpose, the Son of God had to become man, possessing the natures of God and man, in one person (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16). Only so could He perform His mediatorial work which involved substitutional '*obedience to death*' (Rom. 5:18; Phil. 2:6-8).

Concerning the time of His Second Coming, it was our Lord Himself who said to His disciples, "*Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*" (Mk. 13:32).

Although, as God, our Lord was *omniscient*, knowing all things (Jn. 2:24,25; 16:30; 21:17), it has been suggested by some – notably those of theological liberal persuasion - that, as man, His knowledge was limited, so that on some things He could even be wrong and in error. This is totally unscriptural, perversely unorthodox, and totally unacceptable, amounting to nothing less than a blatant denial of our Lord's perfection.

The right understanding of our Lord's words is to be found elsewhere.

William G.T. Shedd, Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary (1874-1890), cites Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, and perhaps the greatest of the Church Fathers, who stated that Christ had "*an official ignorance*", meaning that "Christ as the Mediator was not authorized, at that time, to give information respecting the time of the final judgment." Shedd further states that "the incarnate Son was not commissioned to reveal the time" and concludes: "This explanation of the '*ignorance*', spoken of in Mark 13:32, as *official*, agrees better...with other statements of Scripture." (Shedd, Systematic Theology, vol. 1, p. 319).

John Albert Bengel (1687-1752), a Lutheran minister and theologian, expressed the same view; and in his "New Testament Word Studies", first published in 1742, and translated into English in 1864 with the title, "Gnomen of the New Testament", he wrote thus of our Lord's words: "He may be understood to say explicitly, that He knows not, because he had no instructions to declare that day."

In full agreement with this was Dr Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885), Bishop of Lincoln, who, in his scholarly and learned work, “The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the original Greek: with Notes and Introductions”, made this comment on Christ’s statement: “The sense appears to be, - the Son, who is the Eternal Logos, or Word, the ‘Dei Legatus’, and so the only Minister or Messenger of Divine Revelation to man, does not know it so as to *reveal* it to you; it is no part of His Prophetical *office* to do so.”

In a brief article, E.J. Poole-Connor (1872-1962), highly esteemed minister of Talbot Tabernacle and well-known leader in British Evangelicalism, wrote a short article on the verse in question: “As it was the will of God that our Lord should share with His disciples what the Father gave Him to know and as it was not God’s will that the disciples should have made known to them the day nor the hour of the Second Advent, this knowledge was withheld from Him that it might be withheld from them.”

As the appointed Mediator, on entering this world He was fully aware of what He must both do and suffer (Heb. 10:5-7; cf. Jn. 14:34); and He also knew, in detail, what He must reveal and teach (Jn. 8:28; cf. Jn. 17:8) – and this did *not* include any pronouncement as to the precise time of His Second Coming.

This is the key to a right understanding of His words and it perfectly accords with other Scriptures: “*All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*” (Jn. 15:15)

## **CHRIST STANDS BEFORE THE MOUNTAIN OF ELECTION**

**Andrew A. Bonar**

Often the deeply concerned soul looks at all else rather than the Living One Himself, - thinking of His ways, purposes, work, but shutting its eyes on Himself. Now let that soul be led for a time to deal with the *Person of Christ*, and the effect will be marvellous, if the Holy Spirit enables him to see who *this Person* is.

“*How am I to cross this mountain?*” says an anxious soul, pointing to the doctrine of electing love. “How am I to find myself among the number of the

elect?" "And", says another, "if you cannot assure me that the blood of Christ was intended as much for me as for Peter, or Paul, or Mary Magdalene, or Mary of Bethany, how can I rest on it?" Another, yet more bold, comes forward and declares that, "if Christ did not die alike for all men, and bear all sinners alike on His heart when He died, then there is no truth sufficient for a sinner seeking salvation to rest upon."

Now to all those travellers who would willingly (if they could) find out that there is no such mountain as electing love, because they fancy it is an insuperable one, we say at once, *the Person of the Lord Jesus stands in front of that glorious mountain* whose top touches heaven; and you have to do *with His Person*, ere you set a foot on that mountain.

Our warrant for believing in Christ is simply this, that He cries to the children of men, "To you, O men, I call" (Proverbs 8:4). And He bids them ALL come in the first place to HIMSELF. *Come and see this Person*. "If any man thirst let him *come to me* and drink" (John 7:37). "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28), ye that are toiling up that mountain with a load on your souls that almost crushes you at every step.

All your difficulties about election are thus set aside for the time, - set aside until you have *found Christ Himself*, "who will show you plainly of the Father" in due time. All your difficulties about election are in this manner transferred to *Christ Himself*, who it is (and not we) that must reconcile the universal call with His special love to His elect. Well, be content to leave the difficulty with Jesus; and meanwhile, deal with a *personal* Saviour, not with words, and doctrines, and propositions. Say if you will, "Perhaps I am not elected, and if so, it will be in vain for me to expect a place among His redeemed,"- say this, if you will, but only go and see. Go to the *Person* of Christ, and throw thyself at His feet. Now, you do throw yourself at Christ's feet, when, letting alone for the time all these thoughts of election and the inquiry whether you are or are not in the Book of Life, you allow your soul to think of *Christ Himself*. Will *Christ Himself* refuse a coming sinner? He cannot; for it is written, "Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out." (John 6:37) ...Try *Christ's heart*, - appeal to Him as one "who receiveth sinners", - and tell Him that such a sinner are you."

# SEVEN GRACIOUS INVITATIONS

## Christian Union Herald

1. *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” – Matthew 11:28*

A very precious invitation to every sin-burdened soul. We can come to Him who is the “sin-bearer” and to Him who says, “Cast thy burden on the Lord.” There is no load of human care of which He cannot relieve us, and there is no sin too dark for His precious blood to cleanse, thus making us “whiter than snow.”

2. *“Come and see” – John 1:39*

These two disciples were honest seekers after truth. They wanted to know more and to have converse with Jesus. They had found their true Master and believed Him to be what He professed to be, “the Son of God.” The closer we come to Christ and the more we look to Him, the more satisfied will our souls be.

3. *“Come unto me and drink” – John 7:37*

Christ knows our human nature. He knows what soul-thirst means and that nothing else but the Fountain of Life can satisfy the parched soul. David knew this longing and expressed it in Psalm 42:1,2: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God: for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?”

4. *“Come and dine” – John 21:11*

Spiritually applied, these words imply that the Lord knows the soul’s hunger. He Himself is the living Bread. He satisfies the hungry soul: he meets our every need. It is indeed a privilege to sit down and dine with Him.

5. *“Come take up the cross, and follow me” – Mark 10:21*

We cannot wear the crown if we will not bear the cross. As followers of Jesus, we must walk in His footsteps, and account it all honour if we are permitted to bear the cross.

6. *“Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile” – Mark 6:31*

“He knoweth our frame.” He knows our weakness, and just as the body needs periods of rest, so our souls need the same. We want more meditation – more quiet times with the Lord Jesus. Our Father usually calls his servants away for a quiet time before sending them to important work. Moses was sent into the desert for forty years before he began his real life’s work. Paul was sent away for three years before his public preaching began. He prospers most in spiritual things who get most alone with God.

6. *“Come ye blessed...inherit the kingdom” – Matthew 25:34*

He has not redeemed us to a life of spiritual insignificance. We are born again, made new creatures, heirs, and joint-heirs, with Christ. We are to be kings and priests, and our position is far above that of angels, pure though they may be. May we never despise our inheritance!

## **HE DIED FOR US**

At the siege of Bridgenorth Castle in the reign of Henry II (1154-1189), that monarch exposed himself to great danger, such as would have proved fatal had not one of his subjects sacrificed his own life in order to save him. While Henry was busy directing the siege near the wall, Hubert de St. Clare, the governor of Colchester Castle, seeing an arrow being aimed at Henry, stepped before him and received the arrow into his own breast. The wound proved fatal; and, in a very short while, the man died in the arms of his King.

Although there is no clear or precise parallel, yet what that man did for the one he loved, powerfully reminds us of Christ’s love which moved Him to take our place and thus to die in our place. On account of our many dreadful sins, the arrow of divine judgement was pointed towards us, but – wonder of all wonders

- Christ in His great compassion, like the man in this incident, voluntarily intervened on our behalf, and received the arrow to his own body and heart when He suffered, bled, and died upon the cross.

*“The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20)*

*“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities...he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isaiah 53:5,8)*

*“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3)*

## **THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

Dr J. H. Jowett mentioned two things most disagreeable to him:

“There is nothing more uncongenial to me, as I move about amid the venerable stones of the subduing presence of Westminster Abbey, than to hear the cold, heartless, wonderless recitals of the official guides. Yet, there is one thing more uncongenial still: to hear the great evangel of redeeming love recited with the metallic apathy of a gramophone. *We must avoid cold officialism.*”

“Did not our heart burn within us?” “While Paul waited...at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him.” “Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”

As Dr Lloyd-Jones once said, “The business of the Christian preacher is to announce – proclaim, the good news: the Gospel, the greatest good news that the world has ever heard!...The Apostle goes on to define it further. This good news, this Gospel, is something that is stated and proclaimed ‘in word’ – ‘in words.’ Now you notice that the Apostle puts it in a very interesting manner. He says, our Gospel came not unto you in word *only*...It came *also* in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance...Orthodoxy is absolutely essential. But orthodoxy alone is not enough...The apostle always relied on the power of the Holy Spirit.” The Doctor understood this as “the Holy Spirit

falling upon the preacher in a special manner. It is an access of power. It is God giving power and enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher, in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it up beyond the efforts and endeavours of man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works.”

## **EARNEST, PASSIONATE PREACHING**

George Whitefield, preaching before seamen in New York, concluded his sermon in a bold and memorable way:

“Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway over a smooth sea, before a light breeze, and we shall soon lose sight of land.

But what means this sudden lowering of the heavens, and that dark cloud arising from beneath the western horizon? Hark! Don't you hear the distant thunder? Don't you see those flashes of lightening? There is a storm gathering! Every man to his duty! How the waves rise, and dash against the ship! The air is dark! The tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam ends! What next?”

The unsuspecting sailors, reminded of former perils on the deep, as if struck by the power of God, arose with united voices and minds, exclaimed, “Take to the long boat!”

So men must preach, and so sinners must believe. The storm of judgments is soon to break! “Flee from the wrath to come!” “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?” “Flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

## DIRECT APPEAL TO INDIVIDUALS

In illustrating the importance of a direct appeal to individuals on the subject of personal religion, Mary Winslow would frequently quote a touching incident, related to her when at Cambridge, of the late excellent Rev Charles Simeon. On one occasion he was summoned to the dying-bed of a brother. Entering the room, his relative extended his hand to him, and, with deep emotion, said, "I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed from neglecting the salvation of my soul!"

"Nay, my brother," replied Mr Simeon, "I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters." "Yes," exclaimed the dying man, "you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat, and told me that I was un-converted, and that, if I died in that state, I should be lost. And now I am dying, and, but for God's grace, I might have been for ever undone!"

It is said that this affecting scene made an ineffaceable impression on Mr Simeon's mind.

To this startling fact Mrs Winslow would add another, scarcely less affecting, authenticated by the gentleman to whom it referred. A distinguished American clergyman was especially and deeply concerned for the conversion of a member of his congregation who, from his great wealth and moral worth, occupied a position in society of considerable importance. He had for years attended the faithful ministrations of the pastor, but as yet gave no evidence of a change of heart. Regular in his attendance at the sanctuary, fascinated with the eloquence of the preacher, and generous in his expression of admiration, he yet remained immersed in the world and without the pale of the church. His minister yearned for his conversion.

Calling upon him early one morning, he requested a private interview. He at once disclosed his mission. In a conversation, brief but pointed, earnest but affectionate, personal but courteous, he pressed upon his friend's serious attention the immediate consideration of his soul, the claims of eternity, and



the duty of immediate submission to God. The solemn appeal was listened to with kindly respect, but with the brief, emphatic reply, "I have no time for these things."

"No time!" exclaimed the beseeching, faithful minister, "then, sir, you must find time!" With these brief but thrilling words, uttered with the profoundest solemnity, he left him. The merchant repaired to his counting-house, and was soon immersed in the world. In vain, however, he strove to give his thoughts to business; the words, "You must find time!" still vibrated in his ear, and excluded every other thought from his mind. Quitting the scene of his gains, he returned to his home, bowed down under the conviction of his lost condition as a sinner.

The Spirit of God was now moving, as of old, upon the dark, disordered elements of the soul, and soon a new creation was to spring forth — holy, beautiful, and deathless. In a few days the object of this holy solicitude and personal appeal became a new creature in Christ Jesus, and afterwards a distinguished and useful member of His church.

Such was the tender faithfulness to souls Mrs Winslow was wont to urge upon all Christians, and which she herself so beautifully exemplified. Application of gospel truth in the pulpit, and direct personal appeal out of it, were points upon which she would insist with an earnestness and solemnity of manner peculiarly her own. It was no slight evidence of the sincerity and depth of her holy sympathies, that she shrank not from the task of addressing, on the all-momentous subject of religion, individuals occupying high places of responsibility in the land.

She was frequently, and with tears, heard passionately to exclaim, "Oh who will warn - who will entreat them?"

## **THE TESTIMONY OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR WILLIAM DOBBIE (1879-1964)**

[Distinguished officer of the British Army who served as the military governor of Malta during World War II. Prime Minister Winston Churchill once described him as “a Governor of outstanding character who inspired all ranks and classes, military and civil, with his determination a soldier who in leadership and religious zeal recalled memories of General Gordon and the Ironsides and Covenanters”]

“I came to the Lord Jesus Christ and trusted Him as my Saviour when I was a boy at Charterhouse School, getting on for fifty years ago. It came to me in this way. I felt the burden of sin. Even boys can feel that, and I certainly did. And that burden was a very grievous burden to me.

One Sunday evening I suddenly realised that He had died in order to put away my sins and to blot them out. And God, for Christ’s sake, that evening forgave my sins and blotted them out; and I have not been able to doubt from that day to this that that was a real and final transaction, and that all my sins – even those which I have committed since then, and they have been many – have all been put away once and for all. I could not doubt that, because it depends on what He did, and not upon what I have done.

I would not dream of facing life in the army, or out of it, without Christ. I do not know how people can go on trying to live without Him, especially in these troublous and anxious days in which we live.”

## **THE GREATEST DISCOVERY OF ALL Sir James Simpson (1811- 1870)**

Sir James Simpson, brilliant scientist, discoverer of chloroform (1847), contributor to the science of obstetrics, and the man who anticipated the discovery of Rontgen-rays, was asked near the end of his life, “What is the greatest discovery you ever made?” He replied: “The greatest discovery I ever made was that I was a lost, guilty sinner, and that Jesus Christ, the Saviour of

sinners, is my Saviour.” He described his conversion in just a few words, and as follows: “I looked, and saw Jesus, my Substitute, scourged in my stead, and dying on the cross *for me*. I looked, and believed, and I was forgiven.”

## **THE CHRISTIAN’S SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE**

### **Queen Victoria (1819-1901)**

Queen Victoria was approached by an aged friend near Balmoral, who said to her, “May I ask your Majesty a question?” “Certainly”, she said. The friend then asked, “Will your Majesty meet me in the Paradise above?” The Queen answered as follows: “Yes, by the grace of God and the all-atoning blood of Christ, I’ll meet you there.”

## **EPILOGUE**

If you live in a hard-water area, you will know only too well the problem it can cause for our hot-water and heating-systems. Just take a quick glance at the inside of the kettle and the hard-limescale coating that soon builds up on the element; or view the bathroom with its shower-screen, covered and spoiled by hard-to-remove limescale; or observe the old hot-water cylinder, with limescale showing that it is no longer as it once was.

Over the years, a raft of instant and magical solutions, each promising to give you wonderfully soft water, have been advertised, purchased, and installed, costing perhaps hundreds of pounds; but the end-product invariably proves disappointing, since, despite all claims to the contrary, such gismos and gadgets simply do not work.

The fact is that something radical has to happen to soften your hard water: the installation of a salt-water softener which brings about a regenerative process.

I am not writing this to suggest that you purchase one: but rather to apply this to our spiritual state, hopefully to show you that inwardly, in our hearts, our condition is such that only a radical change will enable us to become right

with God, obtain God's pardon and peace, and possess the certain hope of eternal life.

There are some remarkable parallels: our water becomes hard when, drawn out of the ground, it passes through chalk and limestone rock, absorbing calcium along with other minerals. In Isaiah 51:1, God says: "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." In another scripture, Ezekiel 36:26, He speaks of sinners having "a stony heart". And elsewhere, in Romans 2:5, He solemnly warns of the dreadful judgement which will befall the sinner on account of his "hardness" and on account of his "impenitent heart."

Matthew 15:19 lists the damage that a hard heart can do, while 1 Corinthians 6:8-10 tells us that such ruined sinners will find no place in "the kingdom of God." Our hearts need nothing less than the radical work of regeneration to save us and to make us fit for heaven. Titus 3:5 specifically mentions, "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is as our Lord said to Nicodemus, and through him to others: "Ye must be born again " (Jn. 3:5). I would urge sinners earnestly to pray that God will send to them His Spirit, that they might experience the great change, and so know and enjoy everlasting life.

*Steve Storey*