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LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

“The Wellspring of Wisdom”

“The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook.” Proverbs 18:4

In Bible times, a wellspring was a shaft dug down to tap an underground river. They were places where that water flowed across a deep hollow and only needed excavation to make it accessible. Such subterranean water sources were fed by the melting snows of the Lebanon and other mountain ranges. The water obtained here was cold, clean, and refreshing. Such wellsprings, or wells, gave the most precious commodity in a hot, dry land, and was like a flowing brook of life and refreshment.

The “Wellspring” in the above verse is an appropriate picture of God’s Word and all teaching that flows from it. It is called “wisdom,” and although coming to us through “a man’s mouth” in preaching (or pen in writing), if it is given in faithful exposition and application, then it comes to us with all its spiritual and eternal benefits.

Wellsprings in Scripture

Scripture uses the analogy of wells in various ways, and considering some of these will yield us helpful lessons regarding God’s word.

1. A well was a unique source of vital refreshment.

It was the one place our Saviour could rest and have a drink at Sychar (John 4:5,6). That well had supplied the needs of people since Jacob’s time. So much so that the inhabitants of the place came there with their waterpots including the elect “woman of Samaria” (4:7) for whom the Lord “must needs” (4:4) go through that place to call her by grace.

God’s Word is like that to us. We come to it repeatedly, and no other book can meet our spiritual needs like this divine volume. As Anne Steele reminds us,

*Here springs of consolation rise
To cheer the fainting mind,
And thirsting souls receive supplies,
And sweet refreshment find.*

Where else but from the Bible could we receive such things and be so blessed?

2. A wellspring must be dug down to.

Although some underground waters broke the surface and appeared above ground (called “fountains”), wells had to be excavated. We read of Isaac’s servants digging in a valley “and they found there a well of springing water” (Genesis 26:19). Such water was the fruit of hard work. It is like that with the Bible. Some refreshing truths of God’s Word are on the surface, but there is more further down that is only found by those who read and study with prayer and meditation.

And if we do, we will find that we can share these good things to refresh others as well. “The words of a man’s mouth” in conversation become “a wellspring of wisdom” for our friends to hear and profit from. Those most in the Bible and good Christian books tend to be those who most readily speak of spiritual things. As Joseph Hall put it: “So plentiful is he in good discourse and wholesome counsel.” Let us do all we can to give and receive in this way, and be a blessing to each other.

3. Some wells bitterly disappoint.

In Isaac’s time the Philistines spitefully filled Abraham’s wells with earth and rubbish (Genesis 26:15). That rendered them useless. What a picture of modernist preachers, who claim to dispense the living water of the Word, but who by their unbelieving use of the Scriptures block all access to it.

People attend upon their ministry only to be sent away parched. These are evil men, for they do not satisfy thirsting souls and they bring upon themselves the judgement of God (Galatians 1:8,9). That is why such false prophets should be discerned and rejected (Matthew 7:15-20). Put another way, they are “wells without water” (2 Peter 2:17).

Moreover, sometimes even better preachers can fail thirsting souls. Charles Bridges warns of those who do not seem to possess a living ministry: “The cold-hearted speculative professor has his flow — sometimes a torrent of

words, yet without a drop of profitable matter; chilling, even when doctrinally correct; without life, unction, or love. Good Lord, deliver us from this barren talk of the lips!"

Thank God for every gospel church and ministry which keeps open the well of truth and dispenses the life-giving draughts! And may we never forget our obligation to take this precious gospel to those who, like the woman of Samaria, so need this "living water" (John 4:10).

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us ask ourselves: Am I drinking this living water? Has the wellspring of Scripture brought me to Jesus Christ? Is His salvation in me "a well of water springing up into eternal life"? (John 4:14; see also 7:37,38). It is terribly possible to choose this present world instead. Then, says God, we have "forsaken... the fountain of living waters, and hewed... out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13). Those "cisterns" were pits hollowed out in the ground where rainwater could fill them. The quality of the water was far inferior to the wells. And earth tremors would cause them to crack, and the broken cisterns would then let the water seep away. This is an apt picture of the way this world with its promises disappoints needy souls.

May we all be able to say, because we are drinking deeply of Christ and His word,

*I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But, ah, the waters failed!
Even as I stooped to drink, they fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.*

*Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other Name for me!
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.*

With Christian love,
John Thackway

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Daniel Tribe

On Wednesday 19 June we were very pleased to welcome Dr Ian Sadler, of the Free Grace Evangelistic Association, to our midweek meeting. Dr Sadler gave us a helpful update on the work of the Association. We thank the Lord for the good work that is being done to share the Word of God.

Our midweek meeting on 10 July, took the form of a deputation meeting on behalf of the Bible League Trust. As editor of the Trust, our Pastor led the meeting and the Chairman of the Bible League, Neil Pfeiffer, preached the Word from Jeremiah 36 upon the Word of God: Its revelation and reception. We felt, very much, that the Lord had greatly blessed the ministry to the stirring up of our regard for the Word of God and renewing our zeal for its defence and promotion in our land. The recording of this meeting is available at salisburyemmanuel.org/blt-deputation-2024

On 13 July, the Church held its annual evangelistic BBQ. The Lord very graciously answered our prayers and blessed the day with good attendance and a good hearing of the gospel, as our brother, Ron M spoke powerfully and clearly. It is our prayer that the Lord will yet work that gospel word in the hearts of the hearers and that precious souls will be saved to the Lord.

The 22–26 July saw the Cardiff Conference take place. Our former Pastor, Malcolm Watts, preached on the Monday evening on ‘The Saviour’s Heart’, and again on Tuesday morning on ‘The Believer’s Heart’. Other preachers across the week included Pooyan Mehrshahi, Timothy Nelson, Colin Mercer and Martin Williams. Many of our number were able to join for the week and we thank God for the faithful ministry of Tabernacle Cardiff.

It was a pleasant and sunny afternoon on the 27 July, when, as a Church, we met at Glebe Hall in Winterbourne Earls for our fellowship tea. Approximately 60 members and family joined for good food and good fellowship. We enjoyed a puzzling quiz and some outdoor games and were much encouraged as our Pastor closed the gathering by opening the Word to us. How true are the words

of Psalm 133:1, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*.

On Saturday 17 August, the Sunday School and the Seniors youth groups went to the New Forest Wildlife Park for their summer outing. We give thanks to the Lord for those who went, for safety in their travel, and most of all, for granting a gospel opportunity with these young and precious souls. The Toddler group were also able to gather in the park on Monday 19 August. We are upholding all of the youth work leaders in our prayers, as there is much preparation to be done before the new youth work term begins in September.

Towards the end of August, our Pastor and his wife Margaret took their holiday in Barnstaple. In our Pastor’s absence, it was a blessing to welcome John Saunders to our pulpit again on the Lord’s Day 18 August. Also, on the 25 August, we welcomed Jason Pallister, Pastor of Providence Chapel, Chichester. It is a real encouragement to hear the ministry of faithful servants of Christ, and we continue to pray for the Lord’s rich blessing upon their ministries.

We continue to pray very much for those of our number who are facing many medical appointments and continued treatments, at the moment. May the Lord continue to grant His peace and, in His mercy, restoration of health.

A Word of Thanks

Sue and I would like to thank everyone for all your prayers and loving support since her diagnosis. We have felt the Lord’s wonderful presence and support in so many ways during all the investigations and the commencement of the treatment. We have truly known the peace of God and His abounding goodness. We would value your continued prayers for the success of Sue’s on-going treatment with minimal side effects.

“Peace, I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

With our Christian love, Peter and Sue B

SALISBURY YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

7th September 2024

Theme: "*Relationships*"

For young adults aged 15–25

10.30 – Arrival & Refreshments

11.00am — "*Relationship with Christ*" (Daniel Tribe, Ministerial Assistant)

12.15pm — "*Relationship with Others*" (John Thackway, Pastor)

1.15pm – Lunch Interval

2.45pm — "*Relationship with the World*" (Tom Wheatley, Elder & Youth Leader)

25th ANNUAL SALISBURY CONFERENCE

4th – 6th October 2024

Theme: "*Experiencing the Word of God*"

Visiting Minister: Dr Jeff Riddle

Friday 4th October

7.30pm — The Life and Legacy of Adoniram Judson

Saturday 5th October

10.30am — *The Preservation of Scripture (Jeremiah 36)*

Lunch Interval

1.00pm — *The Universality of Scripture (Zechariah 5:1-4)*

2.30pm — *The Goal of Scripture (John 20:30-31)*

A light tea will follow the final address

Lord's Day 6th October

Dr Riddle will preach at both services at 11am and 6.30pm

8.30pm — After-Church Meeting: Dr Riddle's Testimony

All dates and times are God willing.

More information at salisburyemmanuel.org.uk

CHRIST IS ALL

Two ladies from New Zealand stopped to admire an English garden. Later, shown around the 200-year-old cottage, they spotted a sampler embroidered by Mary Anne Hogan, aged 7 years old, 1853, which had this verse in fine cross-stitch:

The loss of gold is great,
The loss of time is more,
The loss of Christ is such a loss
That nothing can restore.

They asked if they could take it back to New Zealand. How wonderful to know that this child's message, over 150 years old, still speaks to people today!

THE LANTERN

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

Many years ago, after visiting Bournemouth on a shopping expedition, two teenagers started back for home. To reach their home, they had to cross a river, which that evening was over-hung with a heavy fog. They caught the ferry, and the boatman said to them: "You must take my lantern to light your way by the river bank, and across the fields, or you will never find your way in this heavy fog." The girls had gone this way many times before, and they were sure that they could safely make the journey home. So, thanking the boatman for his kindness in offering them his lantern, they assured him that they would be alright without it. He pleaded with them to take it, but to no avail: they were sure they would be fine.

Eventually, the two girls, confident and happy, stepped off the ferry, and soon disappeared into the darkness of the thick fog, without any light. Minutes later, the boatman heard a scream, followed by a loud splash, as both the girls fell into the cold waters of the fast-flowing river.

Very sadly, both were drowned and never reached their home. The lantern could have lightened up their path and taken them safely on their way. But they wouldn't take the lantern which was left behind on the ferry. Their foolish

mistake ended for them in a terrible tragedy. Friends, pick up the Bible; let its teaching guide you; and know that it will safely lead you home to heaven.

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

At the close of a battle in the days of the American Civil War, a young man was found dying on the battlefield. A soldier stopped to give him some help, moistening his lips and supporting his head. The dying man said, "My father is a man of large wealth in Detroit, and if I have strength, I will write him a note, and he will repay you for this kindness."

This was the letter he wrote: "Dear father, the bearer of this letter made my last moments easier and helped me to die. Receive him and help him *for Charlie's sake*."

The war ended, and the soldier in tattered garments sought out the father in Detroit. The father refused to see him at first on account of his wretched appearance, "but", said the stranger, "I have a note for you in which, I think, you will be interested." He handed him the little soiled piece of paper, and when the man's eyes fell upon the name of his son, all was instantly changed. He threw his arms about the soldier, and drew him close to his heart, and put at his disposal everything that wealth could make possible for him to possess. It was *the name* that made the difference.

So it is, when a believing sinner makes his approach to God for mercy and grace. Pleading *the name of Christ*, God's beloved Son, he finds that God is disposed to welcome him and so bless him as to meet his every need. It is all "*for Christ's sake*."

A LOST SHEEP – FOUND AND SAVED

One night, at about three o'clock, a minister was awakened by someone knocking loudly at his door. When he opened the door, there stood a man, an entire stranger to him, who said, "I have come to ask you to come with me to pray with a dying girl." When I suggested that I would come as soon as it was daylight, the man said he feared that would be too late.

As I quickly dressed, he said to me, "I want to be straight with you, and tell you where I am taking you. It is no nice place: it is a house of shame. This girl seems to have known you, or at least, to have heard of you, and she asked to fetch you in order that you might pray with her.

I set his mind at rest, telling him that it didn't matter where she was, since she was in spiritual need; I would most certainly visit her and do all I could to help her.

He took me down to the law district and into a house where I found a poor young girl in her teens. It was at once evident to me that she was soon to meet her Maker. A little lamp was on her bedside table, and I turned it so that the light fell on her face. She said, "I do not think you know me, but I know you, and I knew you would come and pray with me, since I am soon to die. The other girls don't believe this, but I know that I am dying."

As I wondered what would be the best passage in the Bible to read to her, she said, "Is there not a story in the Bible of a sheep which left the fold and went very far astray, and of a Shepherd who brought it back?" "Yes", I said, "that is the story of the ninety and nine, and the one which went astray – the same which the Good Shepherd found."

As I knelt to read and pray with her, another girl – her friend – knelt too, and she was weeping in her grief. I felt the presence of the Lord Jesus in that room. After the reading and prayer, I looked up, and I will never forget the expression on the dying girl's face. "Oh," she cried, "He is holding me to His heart." "She said this again, "He is holding me to His heart." At last, I left and went home. When, a little later, I returned, the poor girl had died, but her friend came out to meet me. She said, "We all wished you had been here when Mary passed away. She was so happy, and kept saying, 'The Shepherd has found me and is holding me to His heart.' She actually tried to clasp the arm of the unseen Shepherd. And then, with a soft 'goodbye', she was gone."

Some years after this, I was preaching the Gospel in one of our cities and, at the close of the meeting, a young woman approached me and smilingly asked, "Don't you recognize me?" I replied, "I'm sorry; I don't think I do." She then said to me, "I am the girl who told you of Mary's passing and of how happy she was in her new-found joy. Once or twice, I have tried to write to you and tell you the story, but I just didn't have the courage to finish." "And what is the story?", I

asked. She replied, “Just this: that morning when the Good Shepherd brought Mary, the straying sheep, in on the one shoulder, I came in on the other.”

O COME TO THE FATHER, THROUGH JESUS THE SON

At a time of great difficulty, Abraham Lincoln issued an order that no soldier was allowed to go home on furlough. The order in force, a man made his way to Washington to see the President, but they wouldn't allow him to see the President. He said his wife was dying and he wanted to go home to see her. Still, they refused to allow his admission. He turned away from the White House, with his head bowed and his heart broken.

As he walked back through the grounds, President Lincoln's son met him, and asked him why he appeared so sad. He told him, “My wife is dying, and I desperately want a furlough so that I can see her; but they won't even allow me to see the President.”

The boy said, “You take my hand; I am President Lincoln's son, and I will take you in.”

He led him up the steps to the President's room, but the staff-member on duty would not allow him to open the door. They said, “The President is busy.” But the young boy was not to be put off like this. Just then the door opened, and the boy cried out, “Father, tell this man to let me in!” Abraham Lincoln put down his pen, and said to the officer, “Let him in.” So, his son came in, along with his new-found friend. The soldier unburdened his heart and told his story. Lincoln dipped his pen in the ink, signed the order of furlough, and sent the man home to his poor, sick wife.

On account of sin, we are very sad. But the Lord Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, finds us in our wretched, grief-stricken state, and He is able to bring us into the presence of His Father, who, on account of His Son's mediation, is kindly disposed towards us, granting us what we most need and delivering us from His rigorous Law. Through Him – and no other – we have access unto the Father (Eph. 2:18).

THE HAPPY MAN

He is One that is conceived in the womb of God's everlasting love (Jer. 31:3). Chosen in the Kingdom of His Eternal Son (Eph.1:4). Born in the City of Regeneration (Eph. 2:5). In the Parish of Faith, of the Family of "Repentance unto Life (Zech. 12:10-12). Educated in the School of Evangelical Obedience, in the Plain of Final Perseverance (1 Jn. 2:27,28). He lives by the Trade of Faith (Gal. 2:20). Notwithstanding, he has a large estate in the Country of Christian Contentment (Phil. 4:4) and does many times a day works of self-denial (Matt. 16:24). He wears the garment of Humility, but has a more noble Suit to appear in when he goes to court – the imputed Righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 61:10; Jer. 33:6). He is found in Christ, the Way (Jn:14:6; Acts 9:1,2; 19:23), travelling in the Valley of Self-abasement, and is sometimes brought to the Mount of Spiritual Mindedness. He breakfasts every morning on spiritual prayer and sups every evening on the same, but on high days and at noon when the sun is in the meridian, his table is spread with twelve sorts of fruits which grow upon the Tree of Life, and which, fed on by faith, he receives with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8). Some of these fruits are electing love, eternal union, justifying righteousness, complete satisfaction, prevalent intercession, free pardon, free adoption to all the glory and felicity of the sons of God, sanctifying grace in Christ, final perseverance in the covenant, and full assurance of eternal glory. Thus, has he food to eat the world knows nothing of. His drink is the sincere milk of the Word. His breasts of consolation – absolute union and unconditional promises. Thus happily he lives and safely he dies. Happy is he who has gospel obedience in his will, sound peace by the blood of the cross in his conscience, heavenly order in his affections, sanctifying grace in his soul, sound divinity in his breast, true humility in his heart, the Redeemer's yoke on his neck, a vain world under his feet, and a crown of glory on his head. Happy beyond expression is such a man.

Author unknown

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY (1740-78)

I most humbly commit my soul to the hands of Almighty God, Whom I know, and have long experienced to be my ever-gracious and infinitely merciful

Father. Nor have I the least doubt of my election, justification, and eternal happiness, through the riches of His everlasting and unchangeable kindness to me in Christ, His co-equal Son, my only, my assured, and my all-sufficient Saviour, washed in Whose propitiatory blood, and clothed in Whose imputed righteousness, I trust to stand perfect and sinless and complete, and do verily believe that I most certainly shall so stand in the hour of death, and in the kingdom of heaven, and at the last Judgment, and in the ultimate state of endless glory. Neither can I write this, my last will, without rendering the deepest, the most solemn, and the most ardent thanks to the adorable Trinity in Unity for their eternal, unmerited, irreversible, and inexhaustible love to me, a sinner. I bless God the Father for having written, from everlasting, my unworthy name in the Book of Life, even for appointing me to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ my Lord. I adore God the Son for His having vouchsafed to redeem me by His own precious death, and for having obeyed the whole law for my justification. I admire and revere the gracious benignity of God the Holy Ghost, Who converted me to the saving knowledge of Christ..., and Whose enlightening, supporting, comforting, and sanctifying agency is, and I doubt not, will be, my strength, and my song in the house of my earthly pilgrimage.

MY COMPLEXION

“They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” (Psalms 34:5)

When asked the secret of her beautiful complexion, a godly Quaker woman replied, “I use truth for my lips; for my voice prayer; for my eyes, pity; for my hands, charity; for my figure, uprightness; and for my heart, love.”

JOHN HENRY JOWETT (1864-1923)

John Henry Jowett was a prominent Free Church Minister of former times. A Congregationalist, he was a predecessor to Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones at Westminster Chapel. After studying in Bradford, Edinburgh, and Oxford, he became minister at St. James’ Congregational Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1889), and then succeeded R. W. Dale at Carr’s Lane Chapel, Birmingham (1895). Later, he became Minister of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New

York City (1911), and then, returning to England, he became the Minister of Westminster Chapel, in London (1918-22), succeeding Dr Campbell Morgan.

Grace

Arthur Porritt, Jowett's biographer, observed that Jowett, in his sermons and books, had a "tireless emphasis on *Grace*." "Grace", he wrote was "the big theme" to which, above all others, he returned again and again, as if, of all truth, it was the one facet that entranced him.

"To Jowett", he said, "Redeeming Grace was the fulcrum of the evangelical message." Jowett himself once said, "With all my heart do I believe that this Gospel of Redeeming Grace is the cardinal necessity of our time," Porritt noted that "In a hundred sermons he proclaimed it. All the wealth of imagery and illustration was lavished upon this theme." "I cannot do anything better than magnify the Grace of God" Jowett said: "One could preach twenty sermons on it."

Porritt wrote, "Grace was Jowett's sovereign word. He was always probing into the depths of its meaning and discovering some new aspect of its unsearchable riches. Each discovery he heralded with satisfaction." "You cannot define it", Jowett said on one occasion, "but then you cannot define anything that is really lovely, still less can you define love itself. As soon as you begin to describe a garden you feel that you have only just got the alpha of the great alphabet and all the rest is left untouched. I feel just like that when I begin to try to say anything about Grace." And, as Porritt correctly and perceptively remarked, "Even Jowett, with all his spacious vocabulary of definition and description, confessed that the multitudinous connotations of Grace baffled him."

"There is no word (he said) I have wrestled so much with as Grace... There are so many who think of Grace as favour, conciliatoriness, and kindly sentiment. I want to say that there is nothing in God that is aloof, nothing of mere composure, nothing of passive regard, nothing apathetic. Every attribute of God is a fountain of vitality and the throne from which flows the river of the Water of Life."

So, how would Jowett define it? "Grace is favour, but it means more than this. It is holy love radiating from the soul of the Eternal into the soul of His children

and radiating holy love into His children, transforming them into His likeness and equipping them for His service.”

On another occasion, Jowett attempted another definition of the word: he said – “Grace is more than mercy. It is more than tender mercy. It is more than a multitude of tender mercies. Grace is more than love. It is more than innocent love. Grace is holy love, but it is holy love in spontaneous movement going out in eager quest toward the unholy and the unlovely, that by the ministry of its own sacrifice it might redeem the unholy and the unlovely into its own strength and beauty. The Grace of God is holy love on the move to thee and me, and the like of thee and me. It is God’s unmerited, undeserved, going out towards the children of men. That he might win them into His glory and the brightness of His own likeness.”

In one of Jowett’s last articles for *The British Weekly*, he made yet another attempt to answer the question – what is Grace? He wrote as follows: -

“It is God (he replied) in the infinite ministries of His own love, moving to the destruction of the tyrannies of sin and death. It is the full strength of the Godhead set against man’s supreme foe in uttermost self-sacrifice. There is nothing of rights on the side of man; it is entirely undeserved. It is never a bit earned; it is all given. It is not even asked for; it anticipates even the cry of our need. Grace moved to the Cross to set the bondsman free and to proclaim an amnesty to all mankind. At the Cross the grim monarchies of sin and death die in the unutterable death of the Son of God. And it is all of Grace. ‘The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Grace reigns in the reign of the Saviour.”

Porritt concludes; “the practical theology underlying all Jowett’s preaching was that men and women must establish right relationships with God by establishing right relationships with Christ.” “Make the surrender to Christ”, Jowett iterated and reiterated, “and then streams of Redeeming Grace will flow through your life, redeeming you from all your sins, radiating qualities undreamed of from your character and ensuring you a peace the world cannot give.”

JOHN NEWTON (1725-1807)

John Newton was the son of a merchant sea captain. He joined the Royal Navy and sailed to the coast of Africa and subsequently became involved in the slave trade. In 1747, he boarded a ship for England, experiencing a violent storm in the North Atlantic. This proved to be a turning point in Newton's life. He later wrote: "About this time, I began to know that there is a God who hears and answers prayer." He married in 1750, and he and his wife settled in Liverpool where he heard George Whitefield and John Wesley preach. He began to have thoughts of entering the Christian ministry, and, in 1764, he became curate of Olney in Buckinghamshire and he remained there for fifteen years, during which period he befriended the poet, William Cowper, with whom he produced the Olney Hymns. In 1779, he moved to become minister at St. Mary Woolnoth, in London, continuing there as a convinced Evangelical and friend of all who loved the Truth of Holy Scripture. His ministry was richly blessed to many until his death in 1807.

"By the grace of God, I am what I am"

One morning, a friend called on him to breakfast and the two read together "*Bogatsky's Golden Treasury*", with its comments on the words, "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10). After the reading, Newton paused; and then he spoke as follows:

"I am not what I ought to be! Ah! How imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be! I abhor that which is evil, and I would cleave to what is good! I am not what I hope to be! Soon, soon, I shall put off mortality, and with mortality, all sin and imperfection!

Although I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor what I hope to be, I can truly say that I am not what I once was, a slave to sin and Satan; and I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, "By the grace of God I am what I am!"

Three wonders in heaven

He once said: "*When I get to heaven, I shall see three wonders there; - the first wonder will be to see many people there, whom I did not expect to see – the second wonder will be, to miss many people whom I did expect to see – and the third, and greatest wonder of all, will be to find myself there.*"

My dreams

At a gathering in his home, he was for some time silent; and a friend requested him to give his opinion on something or other.

“Well,” said he, “I will tell you my dreams if you like. I dreamed that I was crossing a sea. It was narrow but very rough. After long struggling with wind and waves, I entered a still and beautiful harbour. I landed, and meeting a grave and affable person, I said, ‘Pray, sir, what is the name of this port?’

He replied, ‘The Harbour of Comfort.’

‘And what is that stormy sea which I have just crossed?’

‘The Bay of Care.’

‘I suppose this beautiful port can be reached sometimes without such trouble as I have had.’

‘Oh, no; it is the will of the master of the port that it shall be reached in no other way. Through much tribulation you must enter the kingdom.’

“Surely”, said I, “you were making this beautiful comparison earlier while you were silent.”

“No; said Mr. Newton, “it came to me in a dream the night before last, and when you called upon me to say something, I was thanking God for it.”

“I wish,” said Mr. Cecil, his companion, “that we could do awake what you do asleep!”

On another occasion, in a similar train of thought, he deplored the state of the times, suddenly exclaiming, *“What a mercy to know who is at the helm! Bishop Reynolds says somewhere, ‘Jesus will either be your pilot in the ship or your plank in the sea.’ This is good news, and therefore we need not fear for ourselves.”*

MARY WINSLOW (1774-1854)

Mary Winslow (ne Forbes) had Scottish roots but she was born and raised in Bermuda, the only child of Dr and Mrs George Forbes. In September, 1791, when just 17, she married Army Lieutenant Thomas Winslow of the 47th Regiment. Shortly after this, she came under spiritual conviction and was brought to gospel deliverance, pleading the promise, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Christ Himself powerfully spoke to her heart, saying, “I am thy salvation.”

As a family, they worshipped at Pentonville Chapel, under the ministry of Thomas Sheppard. Mary's husband was from a wealthy family, but by 1815, after retiring from the army, he suffered ill-health, and, by reason of a financial disaster, he suffered the loss of his fortune. They decided to move to America, but before Thomas Winslow could join his wife and children in New York, he died, as did also the youngest child of the family.

Mary, widowed at 40, became responsible for their 10 children. Spiritual darkness and despondency overwhelmed her for many months, but grace, working through her faith, enabled her to persevere and to triumph. She raised a godly family, with 3 of her sons – Octavius, Forbes, and Thomas Forbes – becoming evangelical ministers. Octavius became well-known, and authored a number of spiritual and edifying books. In one of them – “Life in Jesus” – he wrote of his mother's life and experiences, recalling her conversations and quoting extensively from her most valuable letters. It is a beautiful book, full of scriptural truth and spiritual blessing, and still in print.

Mary Winslow died aged 80; leaving us a wonderful legacy.

The following extracts are from her journals, conversations, and letters:

The sparklings of the gold amidst the ‘fires’ of the furnace

“At times my spirits are low, but I know it is for my good that I have been afflicted; and I see plainly why it has been permitted, and have to acknowledge that the Lord, even in this, has not chastened me according to my backslidings. I see love and mercy directing this stroke, and I trust it will be abundantly sanctified to my soul. Your dear father is now rejoicing amongst the redeemed, and it will not be long before we shall meet again to part no more for ever. I have indeed been humbled to the very dust, and my mind brought into greater darkness and distress than I have ever experienced before, in addition to my great loss. I often sat upon the floor, and wept aloud in an agony of mind impossible to describe; but the Lord has put the enemy to flight, and again blest me with a sense of His loving-kindness; so that my mind, upon the whole, is comfortable and stayed upon my God. Tribulation must be felt, or it would not be tribulation; and it is needful. I think I have learnt more of my dreadfully wicked heart, and the preciousness of Jesus, during this trial, than I ever learnt before. It has been a bitter discipline, but I hope, with God's blessing, it will bring forth the *peaceable fruits of righteousness*; tending to wean me from the world and from self, and causing me to know where my great strength lieth.

Let us go to the Lord, who knows best, for direction; taking care not to lay down a plan for ourselves, before we ask His counsel, lest He leave us to smart for our folly.”

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival

“Why are not Revivals of religion more frequent in this land? Why have we not those special baptisms of the Spirit, for which the churches in America are so distinguished? That we are not entirely without manifest tokens of the Spirit’s presence we thankfully acknowledge. In the absence of the showers we have the continual dew of the Spirit. But are we not justified in expecting more than this – even the outpouring of the Spirit? Is not the Spirit the property of the universal church? Is not the present emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit? Have we not the prediction and the promise of His large bestowment in these last days? And is not Christ enthroned in heaven, having received the promise of the Father, prepared to rain down righteousness upon His church? Why, then, have we not the blessing?”

“O Lord, revive us in the midst of the years! How is it that we have no precious revivals here, and that the all-important subject lies with so little weight upon our hearts?”

“It is because we do not *believe* the matter-of-fact, although God has promised and declared the truth. When Christ had risen, and some were eye-witnesses of the fact, yet when they declared the blessed truth to the rest, they were as those that mocked. We testify that these things are so, for we have seen and felt them ourselves. Our hearts have burned within us, and our souls have been refreshed as with new wine from the kingdom. The doors have been shut about us, and Jesus has been in our midst within, blessing, reviving, and refreshing us – giving life to the dead, and speaking comforting words to His saints. It has been the mighty work of an almighty God, manifesting His power, and displaying His love.”

The great need for believing, prevailing prayer

“Oh, the mighty power of prayer! Even the best of Christians know but little what it really is. The apostle felt the truth, when he exhorted the saints to *pray without ceasing*. Christian, are you in trouble? – call upon the name of the Lord, and He will deliver. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles*. His ear is ever open to the cry of His people, and His arm outstretched on their behalf. His aim is ever to make you happy in

Himself, and happy throughout eternity. Make Him your confidant; intrust Him with all your secrets. Let Christ be your Friend, and you need no other. All hearts are at His disposal; *and if a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even His enemies to be at peace with Him.* Are you poor and needy? Go to Christ for all you need. Satan may suggest that these are carnal things. But did not the Lord send His servant to the widow, to be fed for many days? And did the barrel of meal waste, or the cruise of oil fail? Did He not send a celestial messenger to prepare Elijah's breakfast while he slept? And is He not the same now? Go, then, to Christ for *all* you need.

"Faith is the gift of God, and it is a working agent in the soul of the believer. It has to do with God, and with Him only. It takes hold of His faithfulness, who cannot deny Himself. Simple faith honours God, and God honours simple faith. True faith works in the dark as in the light. It cannot fail, but will always come off triumphant. And what is faith? It is simply believing what God has said – taking Him at His word. Faith tries God, and God tries the faith He gives. Little faith brings home but little. *Be it unto you according to your faith.* Seek much for this Divine grace. It is for you treasured up in Christ. Look not for it in yourself. It grows in its native soil. It is in Christ Jesus' rich treasure house. It is of heavenly origin, and leads the soul to the source from whence it came. Only believe. Trust Him, ye tried and empty saints, and you shall rejoice in the goodness and tender mercies of your faithful and unchanging God. I may also remark, that nothing tests or strengthens faith so much as the trying dispensations of God toward His people. The furnace destroys everything but the pure gold. Nothing but real faith can endure the heat of the fiery crucible, and, what is strange, it grows in the fire."

"Coupling, then, these cognate graces – prayer and faith – let the churches of Christ prove God now herewith, if He will not open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Christ, our comfort, when we walk in the shadows

"I feel very low in my soul, and need a plunge in the divine life. I have not, since that precious revival, felt so barren and so listless as of late. But God knows my heart, how I long after Him, and how far I am from being happy or satisfied in such a frame. How miserable it is to walk without the sun! But in the darkest hour the Christian has, he may safely rely on the faithfulness of Him with whom is *no shadow of turning.* This is my comfort – Jesus is still the same. But I want to walk closer to Him, and to enjoy the smiles of His blessed face. What is the

world, or ten thousand worlds, to me, if He withdraw His heavenly countenance? Nothing under heaven can compensate for the loss of this.

“True, we are to walk by faith; but I always fear something is wrong in us when Christ retires, even for a day or an hour. I have been trying to examine myself, and can see nothing but evil; therefore, I must turn afresh to Christ, and one believing glance of that all-sufficient Atonement will dispel every cloud, and fill my soul with joy and comfort.

“How I covet the broken heart and the contrite spirit! I would rather seek my Saviour, sorrowing every step I take, than feel a dull, hard insensible heart. Jesus has died – Jesus is risen – and Jesus is in very deed at the right hand of God exalted, and there ever lives to plead the cause of His poor, tried, tempted followers. I have been thinking of the worldling’s happiness. It never satisfies – affords no real enjoyment – to does not reach the soul. Ten thousand worlds could not satisfy me, now that I have tasted to the unspeakably precious love of Christ.

“Well, then, let us hold fast our confidence, and still look upward; and when we cannot run, let us walk; and when we cannot walk, let us creep after Him – but still, *go forward*. Better to follow Him as Mary did, weeping, than be satisfied without Him. Oh that we may press on, remembering Jesus’ eye is ever upon us, although we may not always be able to discern Him!”

In the secret of His presence there is rest, abiding rest

“This morning, before rising, I had such a precious manifestation of love poured into my soul by the God of love, that my heart was broken with deep contrition and repentance, accompanied with a holy longing to be more swallowed up in God – to be more like Him – more wholly and devotedly His than I have ever been. My heart seemed open to God, and His heart open to me. I felt such a spirit of praise as I could scarcely contain. What shall I say to these things? I am Christ’s and Christ is mine. He causes me to know it; I feel it to be so without a doubt, or even the shadow of a doubt. And yet this very thing it is that humbles me in the dust before Him. I weep that I am such a sinner, while I stand in wonder and astonishment that God can love and does love such a one as I, and having loved me in time, will love me through eternity. Oh, help me to praise Him! Jesus is mine – Jesus is yours; and we shall live together to praise Him and cast our crowns at His feet.

“I opened my Bible this morning, and my eye rested upon Nehemiah 1:11: ‘O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.’ It was quite a season of reviving to my soul, and my heart was made glad, for Nehemiah’s God is my God, and your God, too, beloved; and His ear is ever open to our cry. And yet when the Lord was about to answer Nehemiah’s prayer, he was afraid through unbelief. What a good and gracious God He is to bear us as He does! Our wicked, soul destroying, God-dishonouring unbelief keeps us grovelling in the dust, when we ought to be soaring on the eagle-wing of gratitude and love.”

“Communion with God. How little is this understood! A cold, formal, heartless prayer often; and if not in God’s own children altogether heartless, yet how little real communion, - oh, how little! No interchange of love, no confession of sin, no adoring gratitude, no emptying of the burdened heart into the loving heart of God. This is communion, and such as even the angels themselves behold with delight, while they can but imperfectly understand the happiness known only to the saints of God. How was I privileged this morning, confessing my own and my children’s sins, and giving myself and them up into the Lord’s hand, to do with us as seemeth Him good.”

“The Lord has been very gracious in suffering me to draw near to Him, and granting me much of His sensible presence. Dr Love, in his ‘Letters’, describes my experience better than I can myself. If ever my heart truly rejoices, it is in the view of what God is, as seen in Christ, irrespective of my personal interest, and yet not losing sight of my union to Christ. Dr Love, whose attainments were giant-like compared with my poor speck of knowledge, expresses this more fully; but his experience is mine. On the same ladder the Lord has placed my foot, though he is higher up by many rungs than I.”

“When the character of God is unfolded in Christ. – His infinite greatness, overpowering goodness, and glorious perfections, - my soul is filled with inexpressible joy; I feel swallowed up in their vastness, and weep, without being able to say why I weep. Oh, if a glimpse now and then is so overpowering, what must the full vision of that glory be! The body here could not contain it. God be praised for the little view, and for the full revelation that awaits us in that better, brighter world above.”

"I could never have believed that I should have such nearness to Jesus, as I now, at times, enjoy. Read this morning the twenty-first of John, from the 4th, particularly pausing at the 12th verse, *Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine*. His care, His forethought of His disciples is now just what it was when this circumstance took place. He had watched the fruitless labour of His disciples through the night—they had caught nothing. Just at this juncture, when weary, discouraged, and hungry, He appeared. They needed refreshment—He was not unmindful of it.... Is it not so with thee, O my soul? Has Jesus ever been unmindful of thy wants? Never, no never, Always ready to supply my need, He has gone before me in the wilderness, and prepared a table for me..... Even now I feel His presence. I know the person, and I hear the voice. How sweet, how cheering, how comforting! To be with Jesus, and to know it! With such a visit have I been favoured this day. Oh, what little things do worlds appear, when so blessed! Wondrous in all His dealings has Christ been to me. Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, in due time called, justified, sanctified, and shall be soon and eternally glorified."

"The Lord does wonderfully seem to let heaven down into my soul. I have no power to describe it. Then does heaven itself seem so inviting, so attractive. I feel it but a step, and I am in the midst of happiness, perfect and supreme. I have asked the Lord not to send the grim, pale messenger for me, unless He comes with him. I must see His own, well-known face, ere I can welcome the summons. Oh, to be in His bosom, there to rest without a fear or misgiving – to pass through that dark valley in His own loving, Almighty arms, reposing upon His very heart! May this be my case."

EPILOGUE

"Thy hands have made and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments ". (Psalm 119, v. 73)

It is a frequent theme in the Scriptures that we are the Lord's handiwork. For example, Psalm 100, v. 3: "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture." Note from these words that there is something we are to "know".

As another issue of *The Messenger* concludes, let us rejoice in the Lord our Maker and take stock of all that we have learned about Him and His truth. We

are grateful for all we read but we must remember to ask the Lord to give “understanding”, that we may know, in felt experience, the Lord’s Will as revealed in His Word.

The Lord has created all living things but only humans have the blessing of “understanding” the way in which we should live. Other creatures learn by instinct, and by copying the ways of their fellow-creatures, but the Lord’s people have the privilege of being guided by God’s written and infallible Word, as that Word is made known to them by His Spirit.

Psalm 119, v. 105: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”. So, from what we read in the Scriptures, and from helpful guidance found in commentaries and other Christian books and magazines, as well as from what we hear in sound and faithful sermons, we are to increase our knowledge of the Lord’s doctrines and commandments, always bearing in mind that these things need to be spiritually applied to our hearts and to our lives.

The Lord’s people should echo in their prayers the words of the Psalmist found in Psalm 25, vv. 4 & 5: “Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day”.

Is there any better subject or theme? It’s not just head-knowledge but an informed and sanctified mind that we need. A true and right understanding of God’s Word will fire up our hearts, and cause us to have a spring in our step, as we evidence zeal to live our lives to the Lord’s glory.

‘So, what have we learnt?’ Ask yourself that question frequently and pray daily, “Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments”.

Ron Morris