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# DIVINE LOVE James H. Wilson (Edinburgh)

The love of Jesus! Oh, what love was His!

I have read of a mother who was travelling on a cold wintry night, with an infant in her arms, being overtaken by a snow-storm. When the morning came that mother was found alone, - cold, and still, and dead. Search was made for her child, and at length he was discovered under a ledge of rock hard by, alive and well.

The story was soon told. Unable to proceed further, the drifting snow bewildering and frightening her, and her limbs benumbed and losing their power, she would yet, even though she should perish, save the life of her little one. She stripped herself of her warm clothing and wrapped it round her little boy; and, having left him in what seemed a place of safety, she lay down herself and died. Such was the love of a mother!

The Lord Jesus, in His great love for poor, perishing sinners, stripped Himself of His glory, strength, and comfort, so that He could clothe us with the robe of His righteousness and make a sacrifice for us by His death, that we, being delivered from the judgment to come, may be spiritually and eternally safe.

> "Lover of souls, to rescue mine, Reveal the charity divine That suffered in my stead; That made Thy soul a sacrifice, And closed in death those gracious eyes And bowed that sacred head."

## JUNIOR CAMP

In the end we had 5 young people come along to camp this year, and we are thankful for many mercies that accompanied our time. As in previous years, we stayed in the New Forest, and are most grateful to the folks at Crosslanes Chapel who so kindly let us use their facilities again.

It was wonderful to be able to start by attending the baptising service here at Emmanuel, which fitted so well with our theme for the camp of "old life - new life". For some of the children it was the first time they had ever seen such a thing.

As usual we crammed a lot of activities into our short time away - swimming, boat rides, beach, a wildlife park - and were thankful for a good spirit among the group, and reasonably good weather too.

The camp leaders took the morning devotions based around the book of Ruth, with one evening session on the broad and narrow ways, and another about the thief on the cross. There was good attention for the talks, and some of the children were keen to read on in their Bibles afterwards.

The leaders are very grateful for the prayers of the fellowship here, but please do pray on for these young people, that the word sown, may bear fruit in God's time.

#### **SENIOR CAMP**

Camp for our senior group (12-18yrs) took place in early August and we thank God for answering prayers for His protection in our travelling and activities, in giving suitable weather that did not challenge the tents, and for the general spirit of the camp. We are so thankful for those who made camp a regular item in their prayers while we were away and for the generous practical support given by our friends at church.

This year we took 7 teenagers away with us (split 5:2 boys to girls) and so, with the three leaders, we were 10 in total. Once again our venue was Croyde,

North Devon, in which we had our own field with a spectacular view overlooking the sea. Its only drawbacks are its exposure to any strong prevailing winds and that to get to it you have to walk up a hill, which is good for those of us who have a sedentary occupation!

Our morning Bible readings were taken from the book of Ecclesiastes and sought to highlight the pointless nature of a life lived without reference to God, contrasting it with the purpose and meaning of life where there is a vital connection to God through Jesus Christ. Our evening meetings commenced with the singing of a Psalm, followed by a Bible reading, a prayer and then a talk. This year our talks were themed on Bunyan's Holy War. We hope that through them the young people were challenged to think about some of the means Satan uses to alienate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ and to captivate and enslave us.

On the Lord's Day we attended the worship services at Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church, Barnstaple where we were welcomed back and profited from the ministry of Pastor John Thackway who, being in the area on holiday, was preaching for Pastor David Kay that day.

The camp day starts with breakfast, followed by our morning reading. Packed lunches are self-prepared by the campers and we then set off for our day's activity shortly afterwards. This year we enjoyed a walk that started and finished at Lee Bay, a day on the Beach at Saunton Sands, and a laser game played out in a woodland arena. In between we fitted in another walk, beach volleyball, and ice creams.

Camp seemed to go very quickly, a good measure on whether it was enjoyable, and very soon it was time to dismantle the tents and pack everything into the trailer for another year and journey back to Salisbury. We think that next year may mark, in God's providence, 30 years of these senior camps. Please continue to pray with us that there will be, in God's time, a good spiritual outcome from our endeavours.

## RETIREMENT OF NEIL FROM THE DIACONATE

Back in 1978 I well remember receiving a phone call from a Minister in Swindon informing me that a couple from Swindon had moved to Salisbury. Shortly after that call, I visited this couple – Neil and Ruth - in their temporary home on the London Road, and thus a friendship began which has now lasted nearly 40 years. They both appeared at church the following Lord's Day and, finding a spiritual home among us, it was not long before they applied for church membership and, over the following years, they have won the love and respect of the whole church.

In 1989, Neil was chosen to be a Deacon; and for nearly 30 years he has rendered exceptional service to the Lord and His church in the Deacon's office. He drew up the rotas for stewarding, he regulated the heating in the church, and, in 1998, prior to *The Second Salisbury Conference*, he accepted responsibility for the Tape Ministry. In sending out the tapes, and later the CDs, of sermons and addresses, he made friends in different parts of the country, all of whom testified to his great kindness and to his genuine concern for others. This particular service, in which he has been wonderfully helped by Ruth, has made an invaluable contribution to the church's ministry and witness.

Sadly, Neil has suffered through ill-health in recent years, and last year he intimated that he felt it was time for him to step down from the Deacon's office. At the Annual General Meeting this year, the church, expressing deep gratitude and appreciation for all the work he has done, formally released him from his official duties.

This is written publicly to acknowledge Neil's service and faithfulness; and, in a more personal vein, I feel constrained to say that no minister ever had a more loyal and supportive Deacon.

Malcolm Watts

## **SALISBURY CONFERENCE 2016**

God willing, the conference will be held the weekend of 30<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Our Guest Speaker will be **Rev. Andrew Swanson** (Cyprus.)

The general theme for the conference is: "Commitment."

"Commitment to the Lord."	Friday, 30 <sup>th</sup> Sep, 7.30pm
"Commitment to the Local Church."	Saturday, 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct, 10.30am
"Commitment to the Gospel of Grace."	Saturday, 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct, 1pm
"Commitment to Holiness of Heart and	Saturday, 1 <sup>st</sup> Oct, 2.30pm
Life." [Malcolm H. Watts]	

Services on the Sabbath, 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, 11am, and 6.30pm. After Church Meeting at 8.30pm.

## **ANNIVERSARY SERVICES**, 2017

God willing, **the Church's 64<sup>th</sup> and our Pastor's 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries** will be held the weekend of **11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2017**.

The guest preacher will be **Rev. Alasdair J. Macleod**, Minister of Knock & Point Free Church (Continuing), Isle of Lewis. (Mr. Macleod is the son of Rev. William Macleod of Glasgow.)

There will be a **preaching meeting on the Saturday at 3.30pm**, followed by the **Sabbath services at 11am and 6.30pm**. There will also be an **After Church meeting** on the Sabbath at approximately 8.30pm. We extend a very warm invitation to these services and meetings.

## TESTIMONIES TO THE LORD'S GOODNESS AND SAVING GRACE IN OUR LIVES

#### Tom

#### **Early Seeking**

I feel that the Lord has worked a long work in me and it is humbling to look back now over my life and see how, even when I had no desire for Him, He led and guided my every step to this point.

I was brought up in a Christian home and was taught the Bible from a young age, going to Sunday School and attending Services regularly. I went through periods of interest but most of the time had complete apathy to the things of God and the Bible.

My late school years and college years were spent purposefully trying to avoid Christianity and, but for the grace of God, I feel I would still be found in the company, clubs and pubs I used to frequent.

It was an amazing providence that the year I tried my hardest not to attend the annual Sunday School Outing (due to be my last as I was too old to attend more) was when the Lord brought Pauline and me to meet and on the very beach I was trying to avoid.

Although neither of us thought of marrying right there and then, the Lord's wisdom has shone since He provided me with a blessed marriage, a beautiful type of Christ and his Church, and, as you will see, a means of guidance through my early seeking.

In 2011 I left home for Salisbury and felt I had the opportunity to leave religion behind forever. My Dad's advice to me on leaving home was "find a place where Christ is preached": however I made no attempt to look for any such place. Pauline and I had only been dating a few months and, despite the distance, we continued together and she would come and see me at weekends. The Lord saw fit to give Pauline a tender conscience and she could not go a Sunday without worshipping somewhere.

Reluctantly, and at that time only to please Pauline, I agreed to go to the

services at a local Baptist church. We stayed there until the preacher managed completely to deny the severity of hell even in a text as damning as *"there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Even as a disinterested attendee I knew that this completely contradicted much of the teaching I had known as a child, and I could see that it did away with the need for a Saviour.

#### Are you a Christian?

Even after that experience, we still wanted to attend church, and, after hearing the street-preaching in the Market Square one Saturday, we found ourselves heading to Emmanuel Church.

It was a lot more like we had known at home which made us feel comfortable, but we still used to sit upstairs or near the back to avoid too many questions. It was one Sunday while sat at the back that I was asked a question I do not think I had ever been asked before. We were a little slow in our escape and dear Mr. Tunstell lent over the pew from behind to introduce himself. We exchanged pleasantries and then he asked – 'So, are you a Christian?' I did my best to answer by explaining my Dad was a Pastor and I had grown up a certain way etc., but, he just looked at me and asked again – 'So, are *you* a Christian?' I forget my answer then but I have never forgotten that question and it has since made me realise how important it is to have a real and personal saving faith in Christ alone.

We continued coming to Emmanuel and, although for a time I forgot that question, we continued to hear the Word and the Gospel preached with a lot more power than ever before.

#### Blessing

In 2014 Pauline and I were married; and we had to start considering what we believed and how our lives would run together. This was made a greater concern when a year later, in June, the Lord blessed us with our little daughter. It was great concern to us that we should bring up our daughter right before God and, although we attended church, neither of us felt real saving grace and the knowledge of God as our Saviour.

Real stirring blessing came to our family when our daughter was around six months old. We had made the matter of a new car a real point of prayer before God, but we had no funds or source of funds to really think this possible. The Lord knew better however and, through people incredibly close to us but unaware of what our prayer had been, the Lord provided enough money for the purchase of the perfect family vehicle we have today.

A couple of months later we were considering the size of our home. We felt this time though that, with income low and no real savings, there was really nothing we could do. We never really committed ourselves to a proper property-search: however one day Pauline announced she had found a threebed which perfectly suited what we required. We went and looked and it was indeed perfect for us but the rent was far above what we could afford - not overpriced for the market, just more than we could afford. Despite this, the agent said the owner was open to offers, so we took a leap of faith and submitted an offer of £100 per month less than the asking price, along with a covering letter. The Lord made us wait for a while but a couple of weeks later the agent rang and said that the landlord would like to meet us at his home.

We went over on a Saturday morning and spent a whole hour talking, only five minutes of which was about finance. As we left, the owner handed us a slip of paper announcing it was the code for the key-lock on the door of the property. We had seen the property only once, spoken with the landlord for an hour with no hard bargaining, and the Lord had given us the key for the front door!

We went away slightly dumbstruck and then facing up to the fact we would have to tell our landlady we had to leave. We told her straight away and she took the news quietly. We agreed to live out our month's notice but if she could find someone sooner we would try and move quicker. An hour later she was back at our door – 'Tom, I could have hugged you, someone has been watching over us! My sister and my ill father have been living over the road and five weeks ago were given notice they had to move. We didn't tell you so that you didn't feel you had to move, but if you could be out in two weeks they will be able to have this home!'

So we moved, and we were able to praise God for the string of mercies that had led to our new home. Those months were a real time of blessing and drawing closer to the Lord and it was made sweeter as the Lord guided us through a complete car breakdown that saw one of our blessings (the car) almost disappear. Despite the breakdown, which happened just as we were moving, the Lord made it work for our good and taught us that we should praise His name for enabling us rightly to value His blessings.

#### **Conviction of sin**

Despite such a clear time of blessing, the Lord saw fit that it would not last. In early 2016 I became really troubled and caught up in work. I had always felt that I was leading a bit of a double life, fitting in at church but also fitting in at work; I never wanted to be different or make waves. I knew that to honour God I had to draw closer to Him, deny myself, take up His cross and follow His footsteps. My inability to do this myself and my persistence in worldliness at work dragged me into a really self-focused being. I would be quiet at home and use the garden as an escape for everything. I felt the Lord had turned His back on me since the previous blessing, and I felt angry about that, which led me into sins which I thought I had left behind long ago. I felt that all the good had been undone, I didn't pray as I had done, I didn't read apart from family worship, and I was worried Pauline was saved without me! I felt as low as I had been in 2010 before leaving home.

#### Saving grace

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016 I came home and we had our little date night together. I still was feeling so far from God but Pauline and I spent the evening talking a lot about God and by the end of the evening I found myself sat on the bed feeling quite lost. So many thoughts crammed my head; I was fighting with things of work, things of home, all my sin, and the things we had talked about of God. I felt completely overwhelmed.

I looked up to see in front of me the cross-stitch my Mum had prayerfully created when I was 18, the top text – "Be still and know that I am God." In all my "busyness" of mind, thoughts and confusion, I sat looking at the text through tears! I had never known, over all the years I had looked at that text, what being still was or what it was to know that God was God. I tried to muddle through the tears and explain to Pauline what I was feeling, that I still felt, even after first blessings, a great sense of darkness.

I felt I had to pray, so I went into the next bedroom and, for the first time, I prayed on my knees. I told the Lord how busy and far from Him I felt, unable to make myself do right at work and unable to keep myself from sins which

kept coming back. I asked forgiveness for those sins, and I prayed that I would know more of Christ, His death and the healing power of His shed blood and that His blood would wash away all my sin.

When I finished praying I felt a real stillness in my heart. As I went back into our room I looked at the cross-stitch again and saw the second verse – "My Lord and my God". I felt such a blessing from the Lord, such a realisation that the Lord had had to bring me down in order to glorify Himself in the revelation of His mercy and grace, so that I could own him in those exact words – "*My* Lord and *my* God".

In the morning I felt I had to speak with our Pastor but was sad to remember that he was away preaching in Cornwall. I knew I would have to wait until Monday or even Tuesday. I was scared that the blessing wouldn't last and earnestly prayed that I would be helped through the weekend so that the blessing would be retained until I could speak with Pastor. In the morning I didn't know where in the Scriptures I should read, but knew I wanted to learn more of Christ and His death for sinners. I turned to the end of John's Gospel and read chapter 17. I reached verse 15, and it matched my case exactly. "*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*" I found those words such a comfort since the world was my biggest problem, yet, as I now clearly could see, the Lord would have us be in it but He would keep us from the evil. That verse kept me going all day.

On the Lord's Day we had a visiting minister, Peter Beale, whom we had never heard before. I prayed in the morning that I would be blessed by his ministry and that my blessing of the days before would be retained. Mr Beale gave out his morning reading, John 17! Although his text comprised the first 4 verses, it was still almost too good to be true. To add to that, in the evening he gave out his text in Isaiah and referenced it straight back to John 17, verse 15! I just had to give thanks to the Lord for confirming His blessing over that weekend.

Our Pastor came to see us twenty minutes after arriving home on Monday, and I told him all that the Lord had done and how I felt I must honour Him by open profession of His name in baptism.

#### Conclusion

Looking back over my relatively short life, I can see so many instances of the Lord's guiding and caring hand, the most humbling points being when I had no thought of Him at all. He has brought me to a simple faith in Him where I know I can do nothing without Him, know my complete dependence upon Him and know my weakest times are when I try to walk alone. I praise Him for all He has done for me, for providing a supporting church and Pastor, and a 'help meet' to walk with me through this wilderness in a sure and certain hope that after death we will meet again, without any flaws, but made perfect with Him.

## Pauline

#### Early Life

A verse made precious to me over the last year has been, '*I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works*', Psalm 143:5. It has been such a pleasure to look back and see all the works of the Lord in my life slowly and steadily guiding and directing me to Himself, the continuous work of bringing me down in my pride and self-righteousness, in order that I might see Him in His mercy and grace.

I was brought up in a Christian home, attending church every Lord's Day. I always knew there was a God and never denied the fact, but obviously I knew nothing in my heart and life of His power or sovereignty. In my eyes I was OK; I didn't go completely off the rails as a teenager, I didn't openly 'sin' (or so I thought), I wore the right clothes and thought myself better and safer than those who didn't attend church.

Despite acknowledging the existence of God, I certainly didn't live for Him. I would pray to God in tough times at school, I would repeat little hymns like "Gentle Jesus", but otherwise I lived how I wished, enjoying the days of the week and then living "a Sunday religion" before picking up on Monday where I had left off the Saturday before.

I never thought of death or hell. Those solemn facts didn't scare me. Indeed, I even remember saying to Tom just a few years ago that death didn't scare me because it is natural for everyone to die! I had no thought of where I would end up or that I was answerable to God.

When I met Tom in 2010, neither of us had much concern for our souls. After only a few months Tom moved away to Salisbury for work and for the first time we had to think about where to attend when we saw each other. I could have given it all up, but the Lord gave me a conscience, and for reasons that I can now see, but at the time didn't realise, I just couldn't completely give up going to a place of worship – it felt 'wrong'. It didn't matter to me what place, just a place to go on the Lord's Day to satisfy my conscience, this was just fine.

We attended a local Baptist church for the first few months but, even when we had seemingly no concern or desire for the things of God, the Lord worked wonders for us and gave us enough knowledge and discernment to know that the things we were hearing at this church were wrong. In Summer 2012 the Lord directed us here, to Emmanuel Church.

Here was a church very similar to our home churches, where the truth was preached and the Lord was revered. Looking back now, I thank the Lord so much for bringing us back from wandering and keeping us under the sound truth, slowly opening our eyes to our own need, the need for personal forgiveness and a realisation of our state before a Holy God.

December 2012 was a real turning point in my life. I moved out of home to work in the hospital at Basingstoke. Although I applied to university and had interviews for a paramedic degree, I wasn't accepted, and so I decided to apply for a place as a healthcare assistant. I was sure I wanted to move out and thought I would love the independence and living on my own. Well, in a place I didn't know, a new job, and no one I knew living near – I hated it.

The Lord saw fit to bring me to the lowest point in my life. I had come from a big family. I was not used to the loneliness of this situation. I couldn't eat or sleep and all I wanted to do was move back! I had never felt so dark inside; the only thing I remember doing is curling up in bed and turning to the Bible. I even started looking at new jobs closer to those I loved in Salisbury or back home, but I wasn't invited to any interviews. I was kept at Basingstoke for two years before being able, when we were married, to secure a position at Salisbury Hospital. I believe the Lord brought me to realise I wasn't the strong independent person I thought that I was. It was here that He taught me to trust in Him. He taught me humility, He showed me my weakness and my need, and also made me aware that it was only Christ I could rely on, not myself or others. It had to be His way and not my way.

Soon after this our Pastor preached a sermon on "*Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*" (1 Peter 5:7). This was one of the first times that I heard the Lord speaking through the ministry. The verse has been such a blessing over the last few years – our wedding and when we had Savannah - times of big life changes, when I felt much in need of strength other than my own feeble strength. It has been a reminder to me to continually place ALL my cares and burdens into His hands, to place ALL my trust and faith in Christ alone and none at all in my own sinful heart. This was the Lord showing me myself.

During this time I especially remember a sermon preached at Oakington church, "*Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did, so do ye*" (Acts 7:51). The minister said it had been on his heart for a while and he believed that it was for someone in the congregation that day. I felt it was for me. I knew the Bible, I knew of God, but yet I resisted coming to Christ, having no sense of urgency or desire to part with worldly things. Coming to Christ could wait, or so I thought. Although now I was becoming more aware of sin, I was still quite comfortable and undisturbed.

Being drawn under deeper conviction of my sin, I became increasingly burdened with it. I knew something needed to be done. I knew I had to come to Christ, but thought I was too much a sinner and had to make myself perfect, and then I could come. I had so many doubts and excuses. I tried to read my Bible more often and have study-time – this did not last. We started going to midweek services and we always had family readings morning and night. None of this had any effect on me and my coming to Christ.

On one Lord's Day evening last year we had a sermon on the woman with the issue of blood – Have you touched Christ? was the title of the sermon. I didn't hear well, I think I even dozed off during points. On the Wednesday midweek Bible study it was my turn to go to the meeting, but I was tired, and the

burden of my sin felt so great. I wasn't going to attend, but I did and, amazingly, Pastor took the same text, not knowing it had been preached by the visiting preacher on the Lord's Day.

The Lord gave me a second opportunity to hear those words in Luke 8:43-48. I had heard them so many countless times, but that evening the Lord gave me understanding and then I knew that I could not save myself. I had to come to Him, even as that poor woman came to him, just as I was with all my sin and need. Christ did not come to save the righteous but sinners. He is a physician come to save the sick not the well!

I realised there was no making myself better. There was nothing to do but to put my faith in Christ to save me. I knew I needed to come as I was and to lay all my sin at the foot of His cross, where He bore the sin of all His people and endured the judgement due to that sin, so that they could be forgiven. I was feeling so desperate and at the end of my tether, but it was as if every excuse had been wiped away as Pastor was preaching. I felt my burdens lifted and my sins taken away and forgiven – every one of them, as the haemorrhage was stopped in the woman in Luke's Gospel. The words in verse 48 – "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace" - were blessed to me then, and are still very precious to me now, even as I walk forward with Christ.

#### A SHORT TREATISE CONCERNING A TRUE AND ORDERLY GOSPEL CHURCH

## Benjamin Griffith (1668 – 1768)

Part 3

#### OF THE DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

The members of churches owe all their duties in a way of obedience to the will of God revealed in His Word; and their duties are to be performed in love to our Lord Jesus Christ, Jn. 14:15, who is the great Prophet, Priest and King of His Church, which He hath purchased with His own blood, Acts 20:28; Rev. 1:5; 2 Cor. 5:15, unto whom all power in heaven and earth is given, Matt. 28:18 and is therefore our Lord and Lawgiver, Is. 33:22, who alone is Head of

His Church, Eph. 1:22. His person is to be honoured, and all His commands are to be observed, Heb. 1:2; Jn. 5:23, all worship is to be ascribed unto Him, as God blessed for ever, Romans 9:5. All church members, therefore, are under the strictest obligations to do and observe whatsoever Christ enjoineth on them, as mutual duties towards one another.

The officers of the church, whom Christ hath appointed, are to be respected:

(1.) The Deacons of the church, though they officiate but in the outward concerns of the church, as in the section about Deacons is noted, if they are faithful, they do purchase unto themselves a good degree, 1 Tim. 3:13, and therefore are to be respected. (2.) Ruling Elders also are to be respected, seeing they are fitted of God, and called by the church to go before the church, or to preside in acts of government and rule, 1 Tim. 5:17. (3.) Ministers, who are the stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel are, in an eminent manner to be regarded, as being the ambassadors of peace, 2 Cor. 5:20, though they are not to hunt for it, as the Pharisees of old, Matt. 23:5,6,7.

The duties of church members towards their Elders, Teachers, Ministers and Pastors, may be included in:

(1) Praying for them, that God would open a door of utterance unto them, to unfold the mysteries, Eph. 6:18,19,20; (2) To obey them in the Lord, in whatsoever they admonish them, according to the word of God, Heb. 13:17,22; (3) In following their example and footsteps, as far as warranted by the word, 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; Phil. 3:17; Heb. 13:7; (4) In standing by them, in all their trials and afflictions, and in defending them in all good causes, as far as in them lies; in 2 Tim. 1:15, those of Asia are blamed, for turning away, or not standing by the apostle; (5) In not exposing their persons for their infirmities, as far as may be, considering the prosperity of the Gospel much depends on their good report, Acts 23:5; (6) In contributing towards their maintenance, that they may attend wholly on teaching and give themselves to the ministry of the word and to prayer, Acts 6:4. The reason thereof is evident by a threefold law:

[i] The law of nature, from whence the apostle argues, 1 Cor. 9:7-11. [ii] The Levitical law, 1 Cor. 9:13. [iii] The Gospel enjoineth and requireth the same, Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:14.

Let these above cited places of Scripture be considered with many others of like importance, and the nature and tendency of the work of the ministry be well weighed, and it will be clear that it is a duty required by God himself; and that not in a way of alms, as to the poor, which is another standing ordinance of Christ, but it is to be performed in love to Christ, and obedience to his laws, in order to support and carry the interest of the Gospel. Yet this is not to be given to anyone that may pretend to be a minister, or thrust himself upon a church, or to such as run without a mission for filthy lucre's sake; but churches ought to take a special care who to call forth to the work of the ministry, according to the rule of instruction given by inspiration of God, be they learned or unlearned as to human learning, be they rich or poor as to worldly wealth.

The liberality of the people, if they be able, should surmount the necessity of the minister, so as that he may exercise those acts of love and hospitality, as is required of such, that therein he may be exemplary in good works, &c. Moreover, it is a duty on all those that attend on their ministry, to assist herein, Gal. 6:6, and as people do sow, so shall they reap, Gal. 6:7 & 8. See: *Confession of Faith*, 27. When people neglect their duty towards their ministers, such ministers must of necessity neglect their studies, and betake to other secular employments to support themselves and families, or be worse than infidels; then such people must be great spiritual losers in their edification. Yet when and where a church is not able to raise a comfortable maintenance for the support of their minister, there it is not only lawful, but the duty of such ministers to labour with their hands; for to leave such a congregation destitute, to languish without the ministry, would be very uncharitable, and smell very much of filthy lucre; and to expect from a people, more than they are able to give, would be oppression or extortion.

# OF THE MANIFOLD DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS, ESPECIALLY TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

Some of them are these:

(1) Love unfeigned and without dissimulation, for all their things ought to be done in love, Jn. 13:34,35; Rom. 12:9,10; 13:8,9,10; (2) To labour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, Eph. 4:3; (3) Endeavor for the edification and spiritual benefit of the whole body, that they all may grow up to be a holy temple in and for the Lord, 1 Cor. 14: 12,25; Eph. 4:12,29, 2:21,22;

(4) That they all watch over one another for good, Phil. 2:3,4; (5) That they do pray with and for one another, James 5:16; (6) That they neglect not the assembling of themselves together, for the celebrating of divine worship, and so promote one another's spiritual benefit, Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42; (7) That they use all means to keep the house of God in due order and cleanness, walking inoffensively towards one another, and all others, with conscious diligence, and so unanimously to contend for the faith and truth once delivered to the saints, in the purity thereof, according to the Holy Scripture, Ps. 93:5; Zech. 14:21; 1 Cor. 11:2, 14:33.

To be continued

## THE SECRET OF THE LORD Dr. John Kennedy (1819 – 1884)

Dr. Kennedy was born in 1819 in Killearnan, in Ross-shire. In 1840, as a relatively young man, he began studying for the ministry at the Divinity Hall in Aberdeen, but although he had natural gifts and a great aptitude for learning, he remained in an unregenerate and unconverted state. It was the news of his godly father's death in 1841 that brought him under conviction of sin, especially the sin of neglecting the instructions and admonitions of his father. Helped at this time by a man called Colin Forsyth, he gave himself to prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. After a while he was enabled to lay hold upon Christ with a faith which, he later said, "was weak in degree but saving in its nature."

In September 1843, he was licensed to preach by the Free Church Presbytery of Chanonry and early in 1844 he was ordained and also inducted as minister to the Free Church of Scotland congregation in the Highland town of Dingwall. There, for some 40 years, he experienced great blessing in the preaching of the Gospel. Dr John Macleod, in his "Scottish Theology", writes this of him: "Dr. Kennedy was a truly great divine. In doctrine he was clear and powerful and at the same time practical. He was tender and judicious in his application of his message, and he was an experimental divine in the best sense of the word. The great Puritans had no more eminent successor in the Scottish ministry in the 19th century."

Dr. Kennedy along with many of his contemporaries, especially in the Highlands, believed that God was able, in a spiritual and extraordinary manner, to

communicate His mind to His people and thereby seal instruction on their hearts. As 'Rabbi' Duncan once said, "Given a spiritual world, a living God and a living soul, is it incredible that there should be such intercourse between them; that the soul should speak to a hearing God, and hear a speaking God? This, indeed, is the very kernel of experimental religion." In Dr. Kennedy's great sermon, "The Secret of the Lord", printed below, he shows - particularly in Part 2 (in the next issue) that this element of Christian experience is taught in the Scriptures and that, in the past, it has enriched the lives of many godly men and women.

## "The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

#### Psalm 25:14

#### Part 1

All true Christians are peculiar. Their singular character and their exclusive privileges make them so. The Lord causes them to differ from all others by what He does in them, and by what He does for them. He creates a new heart in them, and they fear Him. He puts His Spirit within them, and makes known to them His mind. Into their soul He infuses life, and into their ear He speaks His secrets. Fearers of God are thus favourites of God; and both as His fearers and His favourites they are a peculiar people.

1. True Christians differ from all others because they only fear the Lord. "I will put my fear within them" is a promise fulfilled to them all, and to them only. Covenant grace was put within them ere covenant secrets were made known unto them.

Those who fear the Lord are, and must be, quickened souls. They were once dead in sins, but they are now alive to God; and they live because they were "quickened together with Christ." The fear of God in them is just the life of God in them suitably responding to the manifestation of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." These realise God as others do not. They know Him as none else do know Him. They alone approve of His character and appreciate His greatness. There are Godward movements in their hearts as in no hearts besides. Of them only does the Lord say, "they shall not depart from me." A soul, spiritually dead, may be moved by an enslaving dread of God; but there can be no Godward advances in such a case. Further and further from God will that soul depart, who, left unrenewed, feels the terrors of His wrath. What causes his fear enflames his enmity. The more helpless he feels before the fire of God's anger, the more active is his enmity before the brightness of God's purity. Fearing and hating Him at once, the unquickened soul departeth from the living God.

Those who fear must be near to God. They were once "far off," but they have been brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. In the covenant right of Jesus the quickening Spirit came to them when they were far off and dead. He caused them to live, and He united them to Christ. Being clothed in the righteousness of Christ they were justified by God; the criminals were pardoned and made heirs of life; and they received power to become the sons of God. Having a right to communion with God, the Spirit guides them to the throne of grace. Their homage at the footstool of that throne is fear. It is neither the rebel, who dreads the king's approach, as he skulks on the outskirts of the kingdom, nor the stranger, who has never visited the sovereign, who can do him homage in loyal friendly deference to his rank and rule; but the courtier or the child, who is in the palace and in the presence of the king. So only those who are His loving children and His loyal servants, can honour the Lord as a Father, and as a Master fear Him.

In their approaches to God on His throne of grace, they mingle reverence of His glory with hope of His mercy. This is a combination only found where the true fear of God is. Others may have either a slavish fear without hope, or a presumptuous hope without fear; but the view of God which inspires hope in the heart of a Christian produces also reverential fear. The glory of God, as seen in the cross, commands his admiration as well as his trust. It is at once solemnising and encouraging. It bears him down while it draws him near. It breaks his heart as surely as it cheers it. And the more it has of the one effect the more it has of the other. The more clearly he discerns the rigour of divine righteousness and the steadfastness of divine truth, the more he is constrained to reverence and encouraged to hope. It is to the mercy that is accompanied with truth he humbly ventures to appeal, and he can claim peace, only when he sees it in the embrace of righteousness. His confidence increases with his admiration of God's character and his awe of His majesty. His fear is not now in conflict with his hope. Solemn awe only gives zest to

his enjoyment of liberty in the presence of God. The more I am persuaded that it is the sovereign with whom I commune, the more I prize the tokens of that sovereign's favour. I may, perhaps, have met him on a journey divested of the insignia of royalty. I may then have received some token of favour, but it cheered me not as it would if I had gotten it from the king, when wearing his crown and seated on his throne amidst the splendour of his court. What proved him king and glorious would make me all the more prize his favour. I might have feared that it was not the king that was my friend before, and that he would not acknowledge in open court the poor man to whom he then happened to be kind. But when from the very throne he helps me, how precious is his kindness and how cheering to my heart! I cared not so much for his kindness, nor would I so depend on it, when I could stand up before him as he showed me favour. But how invaluable do I reckon his condescension when I can only receive the token of it lying prostrate at His footstool!

They who fear the Lord seek to do His will. He who does homage to the Lord at the footstool of His throne comes forth to serve Him. In earthly families there are children who make a show of affection in their manner towards their father, but quite forget to do his will when he is out of sight. There are no such children in the heavenly family. Men have children who cannot refrain from expressing a reverent love to their fathers when they are near them, and who act according to their directions when they send them on an errand. Such as these do all God's children seek to be. But in human families are sometimes found children who have not courage to use filial liberty with their father when they are near him, but who prove themselves to be children indeed by their endeavours to please him. They cannot claim the child's privilege, but they do the child's work. They do not commune as children, but they obey as children. There are some such in the family of God.

They have respect to all their Father's commandments. They do not, like the Pharisees, pick out those to which they find it most convenient to have respect, and leave the rest. Their righteousness exceedeth in *breadth* "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." Nor do they rest contented unless their obedience arises from the heart; they seek to obey out of genuine love. Their righteousness thus exceeds in depth "the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees." The aim of their service is higher; they "seek" not "their own" but "the things which are Jesus Christ's." That the Lord may be pleased and

glorified is the end to which they aspire. Their righteousness thus exceeds in height "the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees." Matthew 5: 20.

Their right to privileges depends not at all, but their enjoyment of privileges depends areatly, on their obedience. They cannot be happy without having respect to all God's commandments, Psalm 119:6. They must first seek grace to fear the Lord in order that His secret may be with them. When they wander from His way. He will either frown upon them and be silent, or He will frown upon them and rebuke them with stern words, or He will frown upon them and chasten them with His rod. They shall not be cast out of their Father's house because they sin; but when they "regard iniquity in" their "heart the Lord will not hear" them. Psalm 66:18. When they have departed from the Lord they shall not again enjoy the light of His face till their backslidings have been healed, Isaiah 57:18. An offended father may thrust out his child from his presence, and that child may for a time be outside with dogs, but he is a child there as surely as when he lay on his father's bosom. He has not been thrust out of the Father's heart nor has he finally forfeited his place in the Father's house. "Till the Lord shall "utterly take" His "loving kindness from him" who is the Elder Brother, He will not disown the adopted sons whom "the Only Begotten" has made free. He abideth in the house forever, and so shall they. Psalm 89: 30-34; John 8: 35-36.

It is just, then, as the life of God in their souls is exercised in seeking their Father's face and strength, and they through grace endeavour to do His will, that those who fear the Lord may expect His secret to be with them.

## CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

## William Luff

One who felt lonely in the world signed a letter, "Yours in the want of a friend." The receiver invited the writer of that letter to a meeting the following day, where these words were heard:

"I've found a Friend, oh, such a Friend! He loved me ere I knew Him; He drew me with the cords of love, And thus He bound me to Him."

This was supplemented by a text in the reading for the day: "*There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" (Prov. 18:24). From this we were led to look up Christ's friendship as illustrated in the Book of Proverbs.

Let us follow the thought: "A friend loveth at all times" (Prov. 17:17). Without love there cannot be real friendship; but here is a Friend who "loveth at all times." Glad times and sad times, times of heaven's smiles and times of earth's trials. Never more, never less. Love always in His heart, in His Words, and in His actions. He loveth me now, at this time, whether I feel it or not, whether I love or not. "Loveth" – always in the present tense: not will love when I improve; not did love when I loved more; but "loveth" at this moment of time. Always did love me, always does love me, and always will love me; for it is unchanging and everlasting love.

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24). Sticketh close – as the vine is friend to the branch; as the foundation is friend to all the smaller stones that rest upon it. I am glad it does not say we stick close to Him. No, He sticketh close; and Paul was right when he said, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38,39). No separation! How love, when true, holds to its own through suffering, slander, sickness, death! "A whisperer separateth chief friends" (Prov. 16:28). But no whisperer shall turn Christ against His friends. In poverty, a man's "friends go far from him" (Prov. 19:7). But not this Friend. "All forsook Him and fled" (Mark 14:50): but He "forsaketh not" (Ps. 37:28).

"He loves His people, great and small, And grasping hard embraceth all, Nor with a soul will part. No tribulation which they feel, Nor foes of earth, or fiends of hell, Shall tear them from His heart." "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts" (Prov. 19:6). This is why we are friends with Christ. Selfishness brought us to Him, and He did not refuse to give His gifts. We give nothing, and get everything. "Giveth gifts" – indeed He does! Grace, guidance, and glory; life to all that is good, and death to all that is ill. Eyes to see, and light to see with. Pardon, peace, power, purity, paradise. Gifts increase in value for the sake of the friend who gives them: here the gifts are good, and the Giver is God, so there is double value.

"He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend" (Prov. 22:11). Here we have the character of Christ's friends – their hearts are pure, and their lips are sweet. They love purity, even if they have not hearts as pure as they desire. No good man will be an admirer of dirty faces; nor is Christ a friend to filth except to cleanse it. When a friend calls to see me, I expect him to wipe his shoes: in Christ's presence we must put off our shoes. Here is – A Royal Friend, with Pardoning Prerogatives; A Rich Friend, with Priceless Possessions; and A Ruling Friend, with Presiding Power.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Prov. 27:6). The old apple-tree had ceased to bear fruit: so the keeper of the orchard lopped off the branches until it stood divested of every limb, bleeding and mutilated, wounded indeed; then the friendly hand inserted new grafts, and by and by the old tree seemed to have a new life and bore better fruit than ever; and it was heard to say, as the wind shook it playfully, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Flatterers stroke where a friend will strike. "Wounds," marks you: not one, but many, and hard, or they would not be wounds. They are the wounds of a Friend.

"*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly*" (Prov. 18:24). Hath not Christ shown His friendship? Listen to the quaint words of John Berridge:-

"A method strange this Friend hath shown Of making love divinely known To rebels doomed to die. Unasked, He takes our humbler form, And condescends to be a worm, To lift us up on high."

"The law demanded blood for blood; And out He lets His vital flood To pay the mortal debt! He toils through life, and pants through death, And cries, with His expiring breath, 'Tis finished and complete!'"

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him" (Prov. 27:14). Loud profession is often false profession. He who has the strongest voice for "Hosanna," shall frequently have a strong voice for "Crucify Him," An empty drum makes much noise, and so does an empty profession. Still waters run deep, if of the true river of life. The stream makes most demonstration in its fall: where there is much noise in spiritual profession, there will probably be a "fall" near.

"Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel" (Prov. 27:9). Here we have communion with our Friend, and it is said to be sweet.

> "Sweet the moments, rich in blessing, Which before the cross I spend! Life and health and peace possessing From the sinner's dying Friend."

"*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend*" (Prov. 27:17). These two verses give us the double blessing of fellowship with our Friend. It is as "ointment" to the heart, healing its wounds and sweetening all ill odours; it is also a brightener of the "countenance." When the diamond has communion with the sun it is sure to shine.

"Thine own Friend and thy father's Friend forsake not" (Prov. 27:10). "Thine own Friend." Can you say, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend" (Cant. v. 16)? "Thine own Friend." Blessed title! "And thy father's Friend." Christ is the Friend of the heavenly Father – thy Father's Friend. Beautiful thought! My Friend is my Father's Friend. I am one with God, when I look upon Christ with love. This Friend, forsake not. Shall the cedar forsake Lebanon? Shall the fish forsake the water? Shall the earth forsake the sun? This Friend is and has all, so there is no need to forsake Him. Lord, Thou lovest Thy friends, Thou stickest close unto Thy friends: help us to cleave to Thee. Let Thy friendship hold us Thy friends.

## EPILOGUE

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." Psalm 119:97

The Psalmist tells us that he daily meditates upon the law of God. It is an activity that few Christians today really understand or to which few devote sufficient time and effort. But many benefits are to be gained from this exercise. It is easy to make excuses about the pressure and pace of modern day life, but if we are serious about Christianity we must make the time for this.

#### What is meditation?

It is a spiritual exercise which promotes our growth in grace. It is not idleness or a mere passive disposition, but an activity in which the soul is occupied in reflecting upon and reasoning about spiritual truths. This will lead to delighting in these truths, approving these truths, and being quickened by these truths. Like all forms of exercise, it is necessary to practise and practise in order to become proficient, and then to continue practicing daily. Meditation should be part of our daily devotions.

The source of subjects for meditation arises from sermons listened to, from our daily Bible readings, from Christian books read and even from our fellowship and conversation with other Christians. This means that we have to do more than merely listen to a sermon or read our Bibles or Christian books. We have to seek to remember and consider how a particular doctrine expounded, or instruction for personal living really impacts us. Meditation may be done by considering a phrase like "thy lovingkindnesses" (Psalm 25:6) or from thinking of how the Lord has cared for us during the whole of our lives. Or it may involve a consideration of the work of Christ on the cross and therefore our own salvation.

Meditation is commanded in Scripture and will undoubtedly aid our sanctification.

Bill Norton