

# Milk & Honey

Vol. XXVII February, 2013 No. 2

*Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ*

## The Lost Hope

C. A. Coates

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:3,4)

A little over a century ago, God was pleased to restore many precious truths from the obscurity into which they had been driven. Among others, the full present knowledge and enjoyment of the forgiveness of sins, and the possession of eternal life, were seen to be the portion of every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. The perfection of the atoning work of the Son of God in clearing all believers from all their sins was apprehended more fully than before. The fact that believers are seen of God as dead and risen with Christ, and now by the Holy Spirit have power to *reckon themselves* dead indeed unto sin, was discovered to be the secret of liberty, and of a holy life. It was also seen that believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thus united to Christ in glory as the members of His body; then shone forth again that blessed Star of hope which had been hidden so long by clouds of worldliness and unbelief. *The lost hope* began to burn again in a few loyal and devoted hearts. The midnight cry began to ring out: “Behold the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him.” (Matt. 25:6)

It was at once felt that conformity to the world’s fashions, customs, and conversation was inconsistent with *the hope*; in fact, as it was cherished it exerted its purifying effects upon the hearts and lives of those who had it, and they were marked by separation from the world, by simplicity in life, and by godliness in conversation. Their watchword seemed to be: “Let us watch and be sober.” (1 Thess. 5:6)

Years passed on. From those in whose hearts the cry first sounded it went forth to a sleeping church. What numbers of slumbering ones were aroused by that cry! What a trimming of lamps; what a girding of loins ensued! Thousands will have cause to bless God throughout eternity that it reached their ears. Professors who had but an empty lamp, were led to obtain a supply of the precious oil of which they were destitute; doubting believers to rest in the finished work of Christ, and to rejoice in a known and accomplished salvation; and many dear saints of God saw new glories in Christ

as the Head of His body, the Church. God was preparing the way for the return of His Son.

Yes, a hundred years and more are passed, and that “blessed hope” remains unfulfilled. The Lord is still seated on His Father’s throne, and His people await the moment of His rising and descent into the air. Precious and true as ever is His closing word: “Surely I come quickly!” and He looks for the fitting response: “Even so come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)

Can it be untimely or inappropriate to ask, is this the present attitude of His bride? Alas! even yet many saints are actually ignorant of the fact that “the coming of the Lord is drawing near” (James 5:8); while the scoffer asks boldly, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Pet. 3:4) On the other hand, multitudes in Christendom have heard that Jesus is coming, and have been convinced from Scripture of the truth of the doctrine. Some have heard that midnight cry, and it has had the effect of causing them to go forth “to meet him”; hence, for more than a century small companies of believers have gathered to His name, to remember Him who was once offered to bear their sins, and who will appear the second time, apart from the question of sin, to effect the salvation of the body; to these latter a few words are now addressed.

Are you, beloved, *waiting* and *watching*? Is such the character which is expressed by your lives? Very unwilling should we be to give up the *doctrine* of the Lord’s coming, but do we know the reality of it as a *hope*? Let the truth be faced and owned. Do our words, our ways, our surroundings bear testimony to our profession that we have “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven”? (1 Thess. 1:9,10) Does He who reads our hearts and discerns our secret thoughts know that we dearly cherish the precious truth, possess in power this blessed *hope*, and day by day eagerly awaits its fulfillment? Must we not confess that in many cases where the *truth* of the Lord’s coming is held, it fails to detach the heart from the world, to separate it from earthly things, and connect it with brighter things above? Surely in such cases, though the truth is held, *the hope is lost*. For aught we know, the Lord may come today. If so, in what state will He find us? With what are our hearts taken up, and on what subjects are our tongues moving? The Lord Himself? His unchanging love? His speedy return? Oh, beloved saints, let us awake to the fact that He is just about to return. ✱

## God's Incomparable Word

“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever” 1 Peter 1:25  
Mark Kolchin

A number of years ago while strolling through the seaside resort of Ocean Grove, NJ I stopped in for a quick dinner at the Sampler Inn, a well-known eating establishment named for the many samplers that line its dining room walls. It is an historic restaurant – a quaint landmark in a little piece of real estate on the Jersey Shore affectionately dubbed by the locals as ‘God’s square mile’ for its many decades of Christian testimony. Waiting for my meal, I came across one of these beautifully-embroidered pieces whose pleasant scene was punctuated by the words of Psalm 23:1 - “The Lord is My Shepherd...” It was a superb piece of handiwork that immediately caught my attention. With the familiar verse of Scripture across the top, it truly spoke to my heart as only the word of God can. But what really caught my attention however was the date that it was completed – sometime around the 1850’s! That too, spoke to my heart! Here I was being blessed by the reading of the Word of God on an item that had been produced over 150 years before. Truly the Word of the Lord endures forever.

Despite the fact that God says that His Word will never pass away (Matt. 24:35), it is still mocked and ridiculed by every succeeding generation that disregards its clear message of help and hope. It transcends time and culture and has been an unquestionable source of blessing to countless multitudes through the ages. But because many have not received its message by faith (Heb. 4:2) and embraced it as the living and powerful Word of God able to expose the heart (Heb. 4:12) and fix it (Ps. 57:7), many fail to benefit from the clear instruction it gives of a life without regret and a hope beyond the grave. Why is God’s Word incomparable and why does it endure forever? For starters, it changes lives. Psalm 19 declares that both the work of God (vv. 1-6) and the Word of God (vv. 7-14) attest to a loving Creator intent on communicating to mankind, the crown of His creation His desire and power to transform lives. Six different descriptions are applied to the Word of God with their corresponding effects. The Word is able to convert the soul, make wise the simple, rejoice the heart, enlighten the eyes, warn God’s servants and bring great reward, vv. 7-11. Just look at the pages of Scripture and see how that has proven true. There was King Manasseh (2 Chron. 33), Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, the man of Gadara, the women at the well, Saul of Tarsus and many others including men and women today whose lives in essence were good for nothing until they were powerfully transformed by the life-liberating message of the Word. James 1:18 reminds us that we are begotten by the Word. No other “word” could ever do this – the reason why God’s

Word endures forever. Yes, the Word of God dramatically changes lives and is sufficient for every spiritual need. This being the case, how important it is to preach God’s Word, in season and out. It is the only thing that can truly change people’s lives.

The word of God endures forever also because it cleanses lives. The Lord said to His disciples in the upper room “Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3) The Word of God cleanses lives when a person comes to Christ. Paul told the Corinthians that it was by the Word that they had been “washed” from their licentious lives. (2 Cor. 6:11) To Titus he said that all Christians are washed by the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5) The Word cleanses lives and provides the joy of salvation when we come to Him and also when we come back to Him. When we confess our sin as believers, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:19) King David knew this by personal experience and so did the prodigal son. (Ps. 51: 7, 12; Luke 15:24) Surely we can sing with conviction: “Clean every whit thou saidst it Lord should one suspicion lurk, thine surely is a faithful word and thine a finished work.” There is no question about it, the Word of God cleanses lives upon salvation and afterwards. How important then to read God’s Word so that we can find out what is pleasing to Him and adjust our lives accordingly.

The Word of God endures forever also because it directs our lives. When David was perplexed when God had halted his steps while attempting to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. 6), it was the Word of God that provided the necessary direction to ascertain the proper order in which to proceed. The Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path in this dark world. (Psalm 119:105) Consequently, we should not be alarmed with the latest news headlines. Why so? The reason is because we know the truth and go by another Authority who knows the beginning from the end who sanctifies us by His truth because His Word is truth. (John 17:17) He promises when we are perplexed that we will hear a word behind us saying: “this is the way, walk ye in it.” (Isa. 30:21) He has not left us orphans and as we delve into God’s Word and muse over its pages in dependence upon the Holy Spirit it will give us sufficient direction for the decisions that we need to make in life. He will guide us through the skillfulness of His hands and will do so unto death. (Ps. 78:72; 48:14) Through His Word, He will provide doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. The Word of the Lord is incomparable and endures forever because it guides our lives. How important it is then to obey God’s Word so that we go in the right direction.

The Word of God endures forever because it strengthens our lives also. It brings us joy as we read its promises. It

strengthens us as we feed on it as Jeremiah did who said “Thy words were found and I did eat them and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” (Jer. 15:16) As we read God’s precious Word with the right heart, we will find that it is as God has said “sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Of such “honey” can never have enough. Like Jonathan, it will provide the strength we need and brighten our countenance when we are weary of the journey. (1 Sam. 14:27) When Israel was weary of their journey and complaining, it was God who acted in grace to provide manna for them from heaven which tasted like wafers made with honey. (Ex. 16:31) It stopped their complaining and satisfied their longing. No wonder that God recorded the heroics of Shammah, one of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23:11-12) who stood defended the ground full of barley, the provision of God’s people. His standing in the midst of that plot is a fitting picture of the importance of defending the entire Word of God and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) Shammah knew how important it was. To him, it is worth fighting for even when he was all alone, because he knew it was what gave strength to God’s people. This is why the Word of God is incomparable and why it endures forever –it strengthens our lives and satisfies the soul. How important then to feed on God’s Word.

Despite the fact that the word of God does all these things, by and large the world pushes it aside for “junk food”. But truth be told, even the world has to admit as those in Elisha’s day did that the “situation of the city is pleasant as my lord seeth, but the water is bad and the ground barren.” (2 Kings 2:19) The world indeed may look impressive (especially from a distance!) but what it contains is harmful to the soul and does not bring forth fruit to God. The “water” of this world is indeed bad, but the water of life that God provides through His Word given freely, is a well of water spring up into everlasting life (John 4:14) and a river of life, giving life to everything it touches. (Ezek. 47:9)

Yes, the Word of God is incomparable and will endure forever. It is verified by its own testimony and by the testimony of the redeemed. Occasionally, even news headlines and world events substantiate this claim. One such event is very notable though it is ignored by the media. Amid the wreckage of flight #93 on Sept. 11, 2001 was two discernible items: one was a part of the tire from plane’s landing gear. The other was the personal Bible of one its occupants, a very committed evangelical Christian. It was fully intact, complete with prayer list inside. It is a powerful statement to believers and unbelievers alike and something the world will come to know in time whether they like it or not—the Word of the Lord shall endure forever! \*

## Popular Ideas

W.J. Hocking

Excerpt from *Christ and His Church*

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

*Matthew 16:15*

The Lord spoke to His disciples, asking them what was the popular opinion about Himself. What do men in general say about Him? What did they say about Him in the streets and in the market-places? What was the opinion of the common people—those who heard Him gladly? They said something about Him not evil, not positively dishonoring to His name, and yet in essence they, too, detracted from His glory. Some said, He was John the Baptist, some that He was Elias, Jeremias, one of the prophets perhaps; but they evidently thought He was a good man, a man who would bring them some words from God.

The Lord does not in this narrative condemn this lukewarmness, but such vague opinions would not do for His church, for His assembly; He does not accept these popular notions. The good seed of the word of the kingdom has been sown, and what had that soil produced? Not the fruit of righteousness and holiness, of sound wholesome words that spoke well of Christ. They only said, “John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” The fruit was evil fruit. The good seed of His sowing had not been everywhere fruitful, because of the badness of the soil. There was no reception in the heart of the people for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Oh, beloved friends, cannot you in these questions of the Lord see this blessed Teacher come from God, looking round amongst men; and what was He searching for? Hearts that love Him, hearts that have received the knowledge of Himself as the Sent One from God. And will it satisfy His loving heart if a man says of Him that He is but one of the prophets? Has He come all the way from heaven to receive only that from men?

And does he not also look today into our hearts? Is not His heart towards us, seeking to know from us what we think of Him? It is not what doctrines we hold, it is not what creed we confess, but what love, what allegiance of heart there is for Himself. The Lord Jesus Christ stands today as He stood of old on the borders of Caesarea Philippi, the rejected Man. He was the Sent One from God, but man had no heart for Him. And as He asked for the hearts so He still asks. What is your response, and what is mine, to the seeking of the Lord Jesus Christ? \*

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*Attachment to Christ is the secret of detachment from the world. Anon.*

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*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,  
both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into  
that within the veil; Heb. 6:19*

February, 2013

## Another Year

Frances R. Havergal

“Another year of dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year with Thee;  
Another year of leaning  
Upon Thy loving breast;  
Another year of trusting,  
Of quiet, happy rest.

Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face;  
Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise;  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.  
Another year is dawning!  
Dear Father, let it be  
On earth, or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee.”

## STW Spring Conference

April 13, 2013

John Gordon & Mark Kolchin

North York Gospel Chapel  
York, PA

## Grandmothers

From *To the Parents of My Grandchildren*

It is remarkable, as far as I am aware, no mention of Asa’s mother is given, but instead his grandmother is spoken about. True she is referred to as “mother” (1 Kings 15:10), but the margin points out that actually she was his grandmother. And this little word of warning, and encouragement, to the *grandmothers*. They also have an influence; an influence for good or for evil, on the young lives with whom they are brought in contact. May God help us, who have reached this period of our lives when we are grandparents, to show the very best example to those little ones. \*

## York Bible Study Program

September 2012 - May 2013

Date	Topic	Teacher
February 9	Lessons from Saul & David	Bob Spender
March 9	Feasts of Jehovah	Mike Attwood
April 13	Conference - John Gordon, Mark Kolchin Held at North York Bible Chapel (PA)	
May 11	Assembly Fellowship & Assembly Discipline	Keith Keyser

## Milk & Honey Information

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