

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

JANUARY, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## NEW YEAR ADDRESS

What a multitude of thoughts fill our minds as another year looms up before us! We look back, and are very conscious of the many mercies that have abounded towards us—so undeserved, so freely given. “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.” The rainbow still encircles the throne of God (Rev. iv. 3), sweet emblem of God’s faithfulness and mercy. And again we have to testify: Not one thing has failed of all the Lord our God has promised. “Having obtained help of God, we continue to this day.”

We look forward; and in looking forward would fix our eyes on Jesus. May “Looking unto Jesus” be the way in which we begin the year. Dark clouds threaten on every side. Our only resting place is that the Lord reigneth; and if the floods of iniquity and godlessness lift up their waves and their voice (a terrible voice!), yet, “The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters” (Ps. xciii. 4).

So as pilgrims we pause for a moment to look back and look forward before wrestling on. O to be brought safely through!

“Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall;  
May I but safely reach my home,  
My God, my Heaven, my All.”

May we be given grace to press toward the mark for the eternal prize. But is not time’s little day rapidly ebbing out? With what weight did good Toplady express it: “Time hastens to that grand period when, like a drop that has been severed from the ocean, it shall again be absorbed in that eternity out of which it was taken.” There is only one thing that really matters: “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”

There has been little to encourage in the events of 1971. That which many fear seems imminent—the entry into the Common Market. A multitude of strikes (beginning with the postal strike) has come close to paralysing the country. Immorality stalks arrogantly abroad. Crime and lawlessness continue to increase. Standards are constantly lowered. It has been encouraging to witness strong protests against the permissiveness of the age. May these be honoured. Yet how we need the Lord to return to us in mercy! His arm is not shortened.

But what of the state of our own churches? How appropriate today are the letters to the seven churches (Rev. ii. and iii)! Christ still looks down with eyes as a flame of fire. May we ever be conscious in our solemn assemblies that His eyes are upon us. It is not our opinion of ourselves; it is His judgment that counts, and to each of the churches He says, "I know thy works." Of how many can it truly be said: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and yet art dead"? Our mercy is that we have still "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." But where are we? Lack of grace, of true spiritual-mindedness, of holy zeal, of love and reverence for the house of God, along with increasing worldly conformity—these are but a few of the evils that are rampant. Where is the spirit of former days when those professing godliness had only one interest, one theme—Christ and Him crucified? "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

"O may my single aim be now  
To live on Him that died;  
And nought on earth desire to know,  
But Jesus crucified!"

But our theme is: **OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE**. Despite all our failures and sins, we have a precious heritage that has been handed down to us. May we not lightly cast it away. There is a spirit today that would despise it. The permissiveness of the age is beginning to affect us—"Why bother?" "Don't be so narrow." "Does it really matter?" "Surely this is out of date?" We seek by grace firmly to take our stand here: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee" (I Ki. xxi. 3). Let us be clear. We do not contend for man's traditions, archaic forms, ancient things that are of no consequence. Error like the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 5) has often deceived the godly by appearing in ancient, well-worn clothing. But we do believe that the good way is in the old paths, and that the removing of the ancient landmarks will bring us to confusion. Putting the ark of God on a new cart will not help. Insistent voices cry that things would be different if our articles of faith or our established church order and government were altered. But we stand here: God forbid that we should give away the inheritance of our fathers. What pride and affrontery to blame our present sad condition on godly men who have gone before! There is nothing wrong with the precious truths we seek to proclaim. We believe our order is according to the Word of God. The fault lies with us, in our sinful, unbelieving hearts, our ungodly ways. May the Lord grant us true repentance and humility at the Redeemer's feet and

revive His work in our hearts and in the churches; but may we “hold fast that which we have”—our precious heritage—not cast it away.

1. *Honouring the Person of Christ.* How clear is the Word of God concerning this: that men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father! We believe that there are three co-equal, co-eternal Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One. The blessed second Person, who is from everlasting the Son of God in His divine nature, by His mysterious incarnation became true and real man, yet “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Having lived a holy life in obedience to the law, He offered Himself a sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of His people. That life, which none could take from Him, He freely gave that He might take it again, and now He for ever lives and “is entered into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us.”

The Lord Jesus is precious to every sinner saved by grace. The grand evidence of faith is: “Unto you therefore that believe, He is precious.” His Name is an ointment poured forth, His precious blood is our only hope, His righteousness our only covering, His intercession our only way of approach. If we are ever to receive the white stone of absolution (Rev. ii. 17) from our righteous judge, it must be through the advocacy of the Lord Jesus.

“Then let His Name for ever be  
To us supremely dear;  
Our only, all-prevailing plea,  
For all our hope is there.”

Our sweetest moments have been at the foot of His cross and our chief desire is to know Him more.

The honour of the Lord Jesus is vital. It was on this point that the 1860 separation of Gospel Standard churches took place—the honour of Christ as the Son of God. J. C. Philpot was not contending for a trifle; he saw what was at stake, and in the stand he made contended earnestly for the historic position of the true churches of Christ as embodied in Scripture and in all the great confessions of faith. “That in all things *He* might have the preeminence,” should be the standard in everything connected with the house of God, in everything in our lives. It is the glory of our pulpits when a precious Jesus is exalted. We have *much* to be ashamed of in self; but “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.”

2. *Loyalty to the Word of God.* We believe that the Word of God is infallible. Our lot is cast in a day when disregard for the Word of God is prevalent. Most of the evils in our national life and in the professing churches can be traced to this—a disregard for the Word of God. Until just over a hundred years ago, most people, whatever their views, held to the authority of

God's Word; they believed it to be true. But the opposite obtains today. Freed from the binding authority of God's holy Word, men go to all manner of excesses.

It has been our privilege down the years to cleave to the infallibility of Scripture. If this foundation be removed, what should we do? "For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." Men mock at the Bible; but "the Lord shall laugh at *them*; He that sitteth in the heaven shall have *them* in derision." Their doom is written on the very last page of holy writ. It is from a love to the Word of God that we would be steadfast here, because we believe it comes from God and gives such a precious revelation of Christ, and because we have felt its power in our own hearts. We can say what the bishops of the Church of England unitedly said in 1863 when the Word was being assailed: "All our hopes for eternity, the very foundation of our faith, our nearest and dearest consolations are taken from us if one line of that Sacred Book be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy." Would that there were such bishops today!

3. *Adherence to the Doctrines of Grace.* The gospel scheme is very sweet as it reveals salvation all of grace from first to last. Grace in the eternal choice of the people of God; grace reigning eternally in the covenant; grace revealed in the first promises; grace in the coming of Jesus and the work of redemption; grace in the effectual calling of the sinner; grace in his preservation; grace made known in justification, in adoption, in pardon; grace in the Lord's return to take His people to Himself. Grace *abounds!* The Word of God most clearly reveals salvation by grace. Man is ruined by sin, unable to help himself, unable to do anything good. The preciousness of the doctrines of grace is that they glorify God, and that they are so suited to the needs of a feelingly guilty, helpless sinner. No other tidings can bring peace and comfort to the heart.

" No news can suit a ruined race  
But sovereign, free eternal grace."

This precious heritage has been handed down to us. During the lean and barren years between the Wars, when it was customary even for those calling themselves "Evangelicals" to scorn these sacred truths, the Lord in mercy kept our churches faithful. Now that there is a revival of interest in the Puritans and what is commonly called Calvinism, may we not fail to value our inheritance. But the vital point is to know the grace of the doctrines. Cowper once aptly wrote:

" But none shall reach that holy place,  
And Thy eternal glory see,  
Who boast of free and sovereign grace,  
*Unless that grace has made them free.*"

4. *Insistence on Vital Experience.* How often we are assailed because of our insistence on an experimental knowledge of the truth! But this is not to our shame! *Nothing but a vital experimental religion will take a sinner to heaven.* Eternity is solemn. We want to be right. We do not want our hearers to be deceived. We dare not "sew pillows under armholes." The day will declare it.

The religion of the Bible is experimental. The new birth is an experience; and there is no salvation without it. "Ye must be born again." Repentance is an experience. Love to Christ is an experience. Our religion without gracious experience is like Ezekiel's dry bones. We want the truth in life and power. We know that some fall into the mistake of resting on their feelings. We realise that some "pore on themselves too long." We agree that there is a type of preaching which just lays down a hard line of experience, instead of preaching Christ. These things we do not seek to uphold. The *vital* point on which we insist is a personal, experimental knowledge of Christ. All religion that comes short of this is deficient. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." It is to know Christ—not just know *about* Him. And is not this the sweet theme of preaching—a dear Saviour who may be known? And are not these blessed seasons when Christ is preached in that fulness of grace that will satisfy a child of God, whatever experience he is passing through? It was this preaching of Christ in His suitability to the varying states and conditions of the people of God that made William Gadsby's ministry so attractive and that drew so many away from the formal, lifeless, dry preaching of many of the Baptists of that day. *True* experience he most clearly defined :

" May we never rest, or glory  
In a form, without the power;  
Jesus, make us wise and holy,  
Thee to love and to adore;  
And, in living,  
Live in Thee for evermore."

5. *The Necessity of Gracious Separation.* The grace that saves separates from the world, and the religious world. "What fellowship hath light with darkness?" How vain the world and all its pleasures appear when Jesus is made precious! Constrained by the love of Christ, the sinner is made willing to part with all for His sake. We cannot go to heaven with Christ in one hand and the world in the other. Worldly conformity deadens the heart and dishonours the Saviour. How clearly does the Word link election and sanctification (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2)! Where the latter is missing, there is no evidence of the former. We are called to die unto sin, to live unto God; to take up the cross and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; to go forth unto Him

without the camp, bearing His reproach.

6. *The Importance of Church Order.* We live in a day when order is counted irksome. The spirit of the age cries out for freedom. The permissive view has begun to affect us, not in terms of morality, but in rebellion against discipline and hatred of restraint. But our God is a God of order. What minute details He gave to Moses concerning the tabernacle—things that to our carnal minds appear unnecessary! “See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Heb. viii. 5). Though the ceremonial law is now for ever abolished, the principle remains: are we following the heavenly pattern? Nadab and Abihu were slain for offering strange fire; Uzza perished through touching the ark; Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for presuming to the priesthood. We have been much impressed by the way in which the godly martyrs were faithful to death rather than compromise on some detail concerning the Lord’s supper. They had a zeal for the honour and glory of God. O for grace to see that nothing is unimportant that the Lord has commanded! Believer’s baptism and the Lord’s supper were instituted by the Lord Himself. A disorderly spirit dishonours the Lord and grieves the Holy Spirit.

7. *The Solemnity of Worship.* Anything light and flippant in the house of God is dishonouring to Christ. Zion is “the city of our solemnities” (Isa. xxxiii. 20). There is a sacred joy in believing, a joy greater than anything this world can give; but how far removed is this from that empty, noisy mirth—“the crackling of thorns under a pot” (Ecc. vii. 6)—that many claim to be true joy! The believer rejoices with trembling. He realises that all his blessings come through the sufferings of Jesus. The Passover must be eaten with bitter herbs (Ex. xii. 8). When the Lord’s gracious presence is felt, there is a sacred atmosphere in the house of God. May we be very jealous concerning this. Irreverence and flesh-pleasing lightness are abhorrent to the Lord. “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him.”

These are but a few aspects of *our precious heritage*. The Lord give us grace to hold fast. Insistent voices, like that of Ahab, cry, “Give me thy vineyard that I may have it.” They promise something better. (“I will give thee for it a better vineyard.”) Their requests are steeped in reasonable language. (“If it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.”) May the Lord bless us with many like Naboth, who value the precious inheritance more than life itself and who will be faithful to death: “The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee” (1 Ki. xxxi. 1-14). The time has come for us to take a stand and say: We value our precious heritage. We thank God for it. However despised, we cannot part with it.

“ No, we will tread while here below  
 The path our Master trod;  
 Content all honour to forego,  
 But that which comes from God.”

One word of warning: have we a *personal* interest in the inheritance? Real religion is personal. May it be ours to say through a *personal* knowledge of Jesus: “ The Lord is the portion of *my* inheritance and *my* cup: Thou maintainest *my* lot. The lines are fallen unto *me* in pleasant places; yea, *I* have a goodly heritage.”

“ Thou givest *me* the lot  
 Of those that fear Thy Name;  
 If endless life be their reward,  
 I shall possess the same.”

We send greetings to our readers at home and abroad. We have felt at times like one having access to a treasury of priceless jewels and having the privilege month by month of bringing a few gems from the treasury to you. Our dear young people—May you through mercy find the Pearl of great price and be made willing to part with all for Jesus' sake. Our afflicted friends—May the Lord Jesus make Himself precious, sanctifying your trials, so that you can say: “ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.”

It is suggested that SPECIAL PRAYER MEETINGS for the country and the churches should be arranged, to take place, if the Lord will, during the WEEK ENDING, SATURDAY, JANUARY 22nd. Perhaps in places a few smaller causes could unite. How we need the Lord to make bare His holy arm!

“ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

Your friend and servant for Jesus' sake,

The Editor.

### NOTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD

*Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Scaynes Hill on 7th July, 1970.*

**Text:** “ Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for Me?” (Jer. xxxii. 27).

This encouraging word was spoken to Jeremiah when he was in perplexity. Jerusalem was about to be reduced to ashes; Jeremiah

was in the court of the prison, and he saw the Chaldeans approaching the city. They had brought up their artillery ("the mounts") and it caused his faith to be exceedingly tried. It is not a good thing, my friends, to have a faith that never trembles. A nominal belief looks better on the outside than does a real God-given faith. A natural faith never trembles, it is manipulated by the man himself, it has its seat in his natural mind. But the faith of God's elect stands in His power, and He will try it, as He tried the faith of Peter upon the sea. When the storm arose, Peter said, "If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water"; and the Lord said, "Come." So that Peter had divine authority to go. But when he took his eye off the Lord Jesus and saw the waves, he began to sink. And this is an experience that only a living soul knows anything about. And this word of encouragement is not spoken to everybody. The Lord does not speak to reprobates. He does not cast His mercies about promiscuously to all and sundry, but to His sheep (Jno. x. 27).

"Behold, I am the Lord; the God of all flesh: is anything too hard for Me?" He made the same declaration, you remember, to Abraham's wife. When she was told she would have a man child, she laughed (Gen. xviii. 12-14). But the Lord rebuked her. That laugh was a laugh of unbelief, and the Lord said, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

So there are in the main two things in the text. The first is the declaration of the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah; and then, upon the strength of that sovereignty there is this challenge, "Is anything too hard for Me?" And if there are those who are in a condition to need this consolation, it will be a good word.

In the first place, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." It is a majestic declaration from the Lord Himself as to who and what He is. And it is this great God who is the object of faith. It is faith alone that knows Him by His own revelation. Without it we shall never know God. "Who by searching can find out God?" And, "The world by wisdom knew not God." They cannot know Him. Scientists and scholars can find out pretty well everything concerning this lower world; they seem to be able to find out everything *except* God. But what an exception! I mean, how is it with us, my friends? Life is very short; it is but sinking sand. I wish we could feel it. Whatever a man may possess, whatever he may attain to, at very best it comes to this: Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. That is the end of the best portion in this world; a poor affair if that is all we have! But O this great God says in Jeremiah's prophecy, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Can any hide himself so that He cannot see him? (xxiii. 24). O what a blessed thing it is to know the Lord! A similar word to this the Lord Jesus expressed in His prayer in John xvii: "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life"—not to all flesh, but "to as many

as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." What a blessed knowledge! It can never be learned in a university. I do not put a premium on ignorance; I do not condemn scholarship. Scholarship joined with the grace of God has been, and could be of great use to the churches, as in the case of some of those who have gone before. But the highest education and the most advanced science can never know God. The height of reason can never see Him.

"I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." O there is something that seems to gird the very loins up, especially in these days. Look at the condition of the world, the condition of the nations. It is dangerous. There is nothing in itself that is perilous; it is not a thing at all; nothing material is perilous; it is the *spirit* of men. It is not the instruments of murder that are perilous; it is the *hand*, the *spirit* that uses them. O the terrible power of the spirit of men today! The devil is allowed to have a great influence upon men. But, "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." Nothing can alter that. We look at things, and they will get worse, my friends; things in the Middle East, things in Ireland, will get worse. What is before us God only knows. But the mercy is, it cannot alter the text. Nothing can. "I am the Lord." And the sovereignty of Jehovah is absolute. The sovereignty of an earthly monarch is not absolute, it is conditional. But this is the sovereignty of Him who is the Creator of all things, He who possesses in Himself the fulness of creation, He who has the fulness of grace and of salvation, He whose sovereignty orders and controls and penetrates to our life's minutest circumstance. "I am the Lord." It is His voice, and He can silence every other voice when He will. And He will one day. "Thou, O God, remainest for ever." And this is the Word of God.

"Behold"—take notice of it! Why should we behold it? You look at that precious second Psalm. To my mind it is very nearly connected with the text. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" There is something so sweet about that Psalm in these days of confusion. The earth is convulsed, people are imagining vain things. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." They look pretty big strutting about the earth. What became of Hitler, and some of those great men that made the earth tremble? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." Men are as grasshoppers; they are to Him like the drop of a bucket. All the nations of the earth are as nothing. It would quieten us to know it. "Be still and know that I am God." As though He would say to His people, who perhaps have been going on quietly, "Now you have heard that I am the Lord; you have read about it that I am the

Lord. Now be still and *know* it in the midst of all this chaos." For "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." "Therefore"—that is the reason, that is the ground—"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake." So you see the connection: "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." And when you are favoured with the faith that takes hold of the strength of God, that brings you to sing in the height of Zion—it may be sometimes in the sanctuary, for He does lift His people from the dust; He brings you to feel a little of His divine power in your heart—then you can look at the world and things which make you tremble, and you can laugh. It is a very solemn thing when the Lord laughs at a sinner; and it is a very heavenly thing when He gives a smile.

"Behold!" And where will you see it? You will see it in His sovereignty in the earth among the nations. "I am the Lord." I believe it is six or seven times in the chapter that we read (Isa. xlv) that the Lord makes that beautiful, majestic declaration, "I am the Lord, there is none else." The sinner says, "I know it, and do not want anyone else. His sustenance is all I need; His unsearchable riches can pay every debt." "I am the Lord." In Malachi He adds this, "I am the Lord, I change not." Nothing can change Him. And if the Holy Spirit speaks these things into the heart of a sinner, it will strengthen him. You look at things then in God's light; you see them as He sees them. You will see yourself as a sinner, and you will see Him as He is. You look at the world and all its turmoil, and see the turmoil as God sees it. He is carrying on His undisturbed affairs. And "*His purposes*"—not the devil's—"are ripening fast, unfolding every hour." "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." That is the meaning. He has control of the devil, and He has control over all the mighty men of this world. I have felt, and expressed sometimes, that it has a steadying effect if we see men as they are. You bring the most mighty men there are in this nation; bring them so that you can find none greater. What are they? "Their breath is in their nostrils." What about them now? They know not what a day may bring forth. What about their power? They can neither make one hair white or black, nor add to their stature. That is what they are. Now look at God. "I am the Lord, the God that controls all flesh." It does bring to mind the words in Isaiah li. Speaking to His poor people that tremble at a man: "Who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker . . . And where is the fury of the oppressor?" Where is it? O, when the Lord steps in! It may be with regard to the nation; it will hold good with you individually in your pathway and experience; it will hold good in the church of God.

“Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.” Now this will help us to pray. The first act of faith is to believe that God is. We can never pray until we have some knowledge of Him. You cannot pray to an idea. How many have an idea for a god! But O to know this great God in our heart! And we shall need Him. “Though we tremble when we sing, we would not wish Him less.” Can you say that, my friends? “I would not wish Him less,” though He knows me, knows my heart, knows my sins, knows my life. I would not attempt to take the wings of the morning and flee away from Him if I could. But I would venture to Him, prostrate in the dust before Him. “I am the Lord, the God of all flesh.” *All* of it. Therefore commit your enemies to Him, commit your way unto Him, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Every *it*, my *it*, your *it*, He can bring it to pass.

Well, here then is the sovereignty of Jehovah, laid here for the counsel and comfort of every poor trembling sinner. This builds up the sovereignty in this challenge, “Is anything too hard for Me?” This is a kind challenge to His people, people that are in the midst of impossibilities, people who are confronted with mountains that they cannot surmount: “Is anything too hard for Me?” As though He would say, “Prove Me.” He does allow His people to prove Him. In Malachi He says, “Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing.” It is kind of the Lord to let His people prove Him. He will prove them, He will try their faith, He will indeed; and in that way He will give us to know His sovereignty, and teach us, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.” Well now, you say, I shall never do that, understand Him, know Him. How can it be possible? The Lord makes it possible by His Spirit’s dealings. How does a hungry man understand food? By the connection that there is between his hunger and the food. How does a poor tempest-tossed mariner know the comfort of a harbour? By the storms. How does a poor bankrupt know the relief of a surety that has paid his debts? He knows it by the connection between his bankruptcy and his surety’s riches. And that is how you will understand the Lord. O, His kindness in His word!

“Is there anything too hard for Me?” Let us as enabled take it in one or two points of view. As, for instance, He is *the Creator of all things*. Man cannot contribute one iota to creation. In the first chapter of Ecclesiastes, we have this question: “Is there anything of which it may be said, Behold, this is new?” Nothing. Surely aeroplanes are new? Are they? What are they made of? Who produced it? God allows men to find out what is hidden, to discover His own work. There is nothing in existence, nor can

be in creation that is new to God. It is new to us. They are inventions, *not creations*. Therefore this will bring us to this word in creation, "Is there anything too hard for Me?" The creation is full of miracles.

In the harvest time, you look among the fields of golden waving corn—we become used to it, but it is a miracle. The seed was cast into the earth, but man did not create the seed, he did not produce it. It puts man in his place, and exalts the great Jehovah. Sometimes faith beholds creation, the fulness of creation, the earth bringing forth sufficient for the millions of human beings, and also the beasts. It is God's work. Wonderful! Only man, who alone is evil, creates a shortage for his own selfish end, where God gives plenty. But it will be a comfort ever to behold this majesty of God in creation. I knew a dear man, now in heaven. I knew something of his experience in his everyday life; I had to do it myself. He wandered about as a poor traveller trying to earn his living by mere commission, and he got very down. He had a family, and felt himself to be worse than a worldling. But, coming over London Bridge, he was tempted to make an end of it. That seemed as if it would be the only relief out of his misery. But the text—not the words, but the substance of it—held him up:

"With heaven and earth at His command,  
He waits to answer prayer."

"While Christ is rich, I can't be poor,  
What can I want beside?"

"The God of all flesh." The God of creation. Well, "Is there anything too hard for Me?"

Let us look at *providence*. I don't know your pathway, you don't know mine; but God knows both. And that was a comfort to Job. He said, "He knoweth the way that I take." The margin says, "He knoweth the way that is with me." As though the poor man was so perplexed, he did not know if he was in a way at all; he could not tell anyone what way he was in. We must be somewhere if we are anywhere; but God knows. "Is anything too hard for Me?" Is any position in providence too hard? And how the Lord does try His people. He tries their faith, brings them into darkness and not into light. How sometimes He blasts their gourds and lays them low! How He gives them sometimes to find disappointment where they had hope! How He brings them to see emptiness where they looked for fulness! O how He will take us off from leaning on creatures! Is anything, any position, any tight corner, any dungeon, any lion's den, any empty cupboard too hard for Me? For "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh." Some of you can fill in for yourself with respect to this. Ah, you might say, "I wonder where the scene will end." The Lord can bring a little thing to turn things completely

upside down, and give you altogether a different outlook in life. It may be by a letter being put through your letter box. Before you open it things may be placid, comfortable; but O, some wine of astonishment and hard thing is in the letter and it throws you into complete confusion. The Lord is in it. "He raiseth up the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof; they rise up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble." "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for Me?" Bring it to Me, test Me, try Me.

But then with respect to the most important things, *the things concerning salvation and the soul*, "Is anything too hard for Me?" Is there a heart too hard for Me to break? Is there a sinner that is beyond the cleansing and healing and pardoning power of My sin-atonement blood? O what burdens the sinner will bring when he reacts by faith to this blessed sovereignty. You take the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh. A poor father with an afflicted son brought him to the disciples. They could do nothing with him, and the Lord said, "Bring him unto Me." Whatever it is (it may not be an afflicted son), but "Bring him unto Me." Then again with the loaves and fishes, the disciples said, "There are but five loaves and a few fishes; what are they among so many?" "Bring them unto Me." "Is there anything too hard for Me?" O my friends, it will take in your life's minutest circumstance, and it will take in the whole of your soul's salvation.

You take again the case of the dying thief. Those who knew the man, those who had not seen the end of him would have said the man was lost; his life declared it. Was it too hard for the Lord? A work of grace from beginning to end was completed in that dying thief's soul, the whole work of grace. Conviction of sin—"We suffer justly, but this Man hath done nothing amiss." It was revealed to him that the sacred Person that was crucified there was a King. It was revealed to him that He would enter in to the kingdom. So there is no sinner too hard for the Lord. Why? "This Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood," *because* He continueth, because He is eternal, because He cannot change, He hath an unchangeable kingdom, and is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." There is no sin too great, no guilt too high. O here is love! His love is a sovereign love, and Paul desired that the Ephesians might know it, "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." The depth of His love is beyond the depth of uttermost sin; the depth of love was when He was made sin for His people that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The height of His love is the answer to His prayer: "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may

behold My glory." The length and the breadth of His love is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him.

"Is there anything too hard for Me?" Any enemy that is too great for My omnipotence? Bring *your enemies*, and if you bring your greatest enemy to Him, you will bring yourself. I say it sadly, my friends. I can say, and God knows I lie not, that my biggest enemy is myself, and my biggest trouble is sin. If He deals with those two things, it will be well with us in trying times, testing times. "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is anything too hard for Me?"

And what a *kind word this is to a praying parent*. Look at their children—this is the fashion of the day; children are allured, they follow the fashions, they go away from God, they forsake all modesty—and you look at them. Are any of them too hard for the Lord? You want to read Ezekiel xxxvii about the dry bones. Were they too hard for the Lord? Too dry, too dead? "Son of man, prophesy upon these bones and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear ye the Word of the Lord." "Where the word of a king is, there is power." Then there was a shaking and a coming together, bone to his bone. Then He put breath in them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

"Is there anything too hard for Me?" I do think there are some things indefinite in the Word of God, mercifully so. I mean, if we had a list of things in the Bible that are not too hard for the Lord, you might go down the list and say, "Well, my trouble is not there, my difficulties, my impossibilities, my enemy is not there." But He says, "Is *anything*?" Then you join with that this word: "If ye shall ask *anything* in My name I will do it." It is the same *anything* that is based upon the same sovereignty. Therefore, when He blesses His people, in those blessings they partake of this great God. Sovereignty cannot be communicated to a creature, but that which is sovereign can. For instance, it is sovereign grace that saves them, it is invincible grace, and when that grace comes to a sinner, then it is not too hard for the Lord. He is the God of all flesh, and when that grace reaches a sinner's heart, then that sinner will be apprehended, like a policeman puts his hand upon a criminal's shoulder and apprehends him. And O what power there is when that divine voice says in the heart of that sinner, "Ye are not your own. You thought you were, you would be if you could, but you cannot; you are Mine. Ye are bought with a price"!

"Is anything too hard for Me?" Well, is this your case, my friend? This is applicable to every kind of case and condition, whether it is in your circumstances, or whether it is in your body. Oh look where it brought the man taken with a palsy; and the Lord said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Actually that was not what they brought him there for, but the Lord purposely did that. They brought him to Him to cure his body. He did not say anything

about his body, but, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." That upset the Pharisees. "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Then the Lord reversed it. He can reverse things, and bring His purposes to pass. He is able to say, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," or, "Take up thy bed and walk." He did both. Therefore a poor sinner can take his poor body to the Lord, and his soul at the same time, and say, "Lord, here is my poor body, and here is my immortal soul; nothing is too hard for Thee." If the Lord is with you, it will help you to "lie submissive in His hands, and know no will but His," it will make you thankful even under much painful affliction to feel, "A Father's hand prepares the cup, and what He wills is best." You can drop into His hands unreservedly, whether for life or for death.

"Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is anything too hard for Me?" It may be the greatest trial, the most trembling consideration is *death*. Is that too hard for Him? Well, look at the cry of victory, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Nothing was too hard for Him; He extracted the sting upon Calvary for every one of His people. He took the terror and the victory out of the grave when He rose again. Therefore the secret of the whole is just this: One with Jesus.

"One in the tomb; one when He rose;  
One when He triumphed o'er His foes;  
One when in heaven He took His seat,  
While seraphs sang all hell's defeat."

Amen.

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### HEAVENLY BREATHINGS

*Extracts from Diary and Notes of Mr. S. F. Paul*

1927, Jan. 14th Attended my first church meeting, and felt how solemn are all matters relating to the church, as receiving authority from the great Head of the church to deal with things that arise. Felt earnest desires to be kept so as never to become a trouble to the church, but to be made in some measure a fruit-bearing member.

*Feb. 18th* This afternoon these words came to my mind:

"And gilds the bed of death with light,"

but I could not remember the words correctly for some time. When reaching chapel in the evening, I took the hymnbook, desiring that I might find the words, and my eyes lighted at once on the very verse in which the lines occur:

"It makes the coward spirit brave,  
And nerves the feeble arm for fight:  
It takes its terror from the grave,  
And gilds the bed of death with light."

Was not the Lord in this bidding me call to mind His cross? And oh, how suitably the whole hymn sets forth the cross of Christ as our comfort in life and death, and what desires I feel that it may indeed be light on my dying bed!

*Feb. 20th* How barren and prayerless I felt this morning when called upon to speak in prayer, and thought I knew nothing aright of sin or of Christ. These words in Mr. Bourne's letters seemed suitable in the afternoon: "We must believe though we are barren and fruitless and dead, yet Christ has died to revive such sensibly barren, fruitless and dead sinners, *whom He has made to pine after Him.*"

*April 3rd* Before the prayer-meeting, I opened on those lines of Berridge, which have been much in my mind the last few days as a suitable prayer against the self and pride which at times work powerfully within:

"Do make me, Lord, a little child,  
Right simple-hearted, meek and mild,  
And loving to the end."

My opening on these lines raised a hope that the Lord regarded my desires to confess pride, and my cries to Him that it may be subdued and a willingness given to be the least.

*May 23rd* Yesterday, two things seemed to be opened to me in a way in which I had never seen them before. The first was in the morning, when Mr. Popham, in his opening remarks, said that the new birth necessitated the saints' final perseverance. The truth of this arrested my mind with the question: what would become of this new creation if it were possible for the saint to fall away from grace? It is a real creation, resulting in a "new creature" or a "new man," and this new creature cannot be annihilated. Once created in the soul, it must live for ever, and so must its possessor: "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish."

The second thing was in the evening sermon. I had been troubled for some time that my sins were too great to be pardoned, or at least that the infinite sufficiency of the blood of Christ had not been clearly shown to me; and as Mr. Popham quoted that word: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of *us all*," it was immediately shown to me, as I had never before seen, that the blood of Christ atoned in one day for all the sins of all the elect and therefore must be of infinite efficiency and able to atone for mine if I am one of those elect. I thought of all the Bible saints and of all the thousands of saints who have lived since and those that will exist to the end of time, and then of that multitude which no man can number who shall be clothed in white robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb—and if the sins of each are countless (for who can understand his errors?), we are lost in infinitude if we try to count up the sum of sins for which the dear Saviour atoned

in that one offering of Himself. One's own personal sins, though so great in themselves and to himself, I saw to be but as a drop in the mighty ocean of guilt which the Saviour put away by that one offering. Hence the blood must be of infinite virtue, as indeed it is, being the blood of God.

“ Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more.”

1928, *June 20th* Some things seemed clear to me in the night regarding God's dealings with His people in respect of His promises to them. Often, after a promise has been given, things are allowed to go just contrary to that promise, and I saw as I had not seen before, that the Lord brings this about in order to create a condition to which the promise is applicable, and to cause His people to cry to Him for the very thing He has promised. He says: “ Prove me now herewith,” and He not only tries *them* by these contrary dealings, but will have them *try Him*, and prove both His faithfulness to His Word and His ability to perform that which He has promised. Both these points are brought out in the case of Abraham and Sarah. The latter “ judged Him faithful that had promised,” and of the former it is said, he counted that what God had promised, “ He was able also to perform.” If there were not this being brought into a case where a performance of the promise is so needed, there would be little prayer and exercise for its fulfilment. Therefore we should not be discouraged when things go right against the Word of promise on which we have been caused to hope, but rather may we discern that the Lord is bringing about a state and case which answers to the promise, and makes room for its fulfilment.

*Oct. 13th* I mourned before the Lord my inability to speak, and the trial it is often to me, and reminded Him of that word in Jeremiah 1 to which I hoped He had directed me many years ago when troubled about the same matter.

1929, *March 17th* This morning, at the prayer meeting, one of the brethren referred a good deal to the anchor of hope, and it seemed sweet to think of having that hope in Christ as an anchor to hold the soul and bring through every storm and trial, and especially the last shock of death itself, although as yet there was not that full assurance one desired. Seeking a confirmation of these thoughts afterwards, I lighted on that verse in the hymn book:

“ 'Tis good to cast an anchor here  
And patient wait, till thou shalt see  
Thy hopes for heaven more bright and clear,  
Blessed with a surer prophecy.”

This seemed to express just what I wanted, and to encourage me to press on for that fuller assurance.

1933, *Oct. 3rd* It is some time since I recorded anything, and feeling this morning somewhat powerfully the freeness of salvation, I have thought I ought to record this. There came over me this morning such a feeling that the way of salvation is free, and the word "free" seemed to convey to me that there was no hindrance to my partaking of it. No price set, and not only that, but no barrier, no fence put in the way, no bar; all a free gift. And then as I thought what a sinner I am, those lines came sweetly and confirmingly into my mind:

"For sinners, Lord, Thou cam'st to bleed  
And I'm a sinner vile indeed,"

and also that wonderful word: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

1938 (*undated—during a time of family trouble*) How often at this time my cry was:

"Let not my heart with sorrow break  
But save me for Thy mercy's sake!"

I felt directed to a sermon by Mr. Hazelrigg on "The cup passing in the drinking." The reading of this gave me the hope that this trouble was indeed the chastening of a Father, and was an evidence of my sonship, and I was helped to read the sermon at Galeed on the Lord's day. On the next day, a sweet hope of this relationship continued with me, and the words were confirming to me: "It became Him . . . in bringing many *sons* to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." In the evening I thought: "If anyone asked me of my hope, what should I say?" I felt I would say that I had a comfortable hope of my sonship, and immediately those lines came sweetly to my mind:

"Thrice *comfortable hope*  
That calms my stormy breast;  
My Father's hand prepares the cup,  
And what He wills is best,"

and this seemed to confirm it all.

1963 (*undated*) About the beginning of the year, I began to lose the little comforts I had. Often in the night seasons, as the evils of my own heart troubled me, and the temptation of the devil within stirred up these things, I wondered how I could be right, and yet have these evils within. On Easter Sunday the lines came to my mind:

"These inward trials I employ,  
From self and pride to set thee free;  
And break thy schemes of earthly joy  
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me."

My distressed soul seemed to cling to the words as an answer to my questionings; and the whole hymn seemed so suitable.

1966, *Sept. 8th* After rest, woke with last two lines of hymn 911:

“ Yet still our souls desire anew  
His sweetest, loveliest face to view,”

which came with sweetness, and left a peculiar sanctifying effect on my soul, such as I had never felt before or since. Christ was felt to be precious, and I did not want to be diverted from it.

1967, *July 27th* Verse in Anne Steele’s hymns suitable :

“ Lord, shall the breathings of my heart  
Aspire in vain to Thee?  
Confirm my hope, that where Thou art  
I shall for ever be.”

1971, *March 17th* Our Pastor in prayer pleaded that as the Lord’s people have been our companions in life, and we have not wanted the company of the world, so we might not have to dwell with the wicked in eternity. I felt a sweet echo to this and a hope in I John iii. 14: “ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren,”

*May 24th* “ Guide a poor pilgrim safely on ” (945) came suitably during the night, when feeling after guidance—(one of my favourite hymns).

*June 1st* On awaking from my rest, the line of a hymn came very sweetly and tenderly to me: “ Watched them with a tender care ” (768); followed by: “ All Thy chosen cost Thee wounds and blood and smart ” (349). Both relate to the Good Shepherd. Oh that we may prove Him to be that to us!

*June 14th* Went to rest with many fears from temptations of the enemy of souls. Soon after awaking, the words came with some sweetness: “ Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.” Feeling sure these were in Job, Psalms, or Proverbs, began reading in Job from chapter i, and was further sweetly helped by what is said of Satan, showing that he can go no further than permitted. Coming to chapter v (a special one to me), felt “ This is the one,” and found the words at the end.

*June 15th* After waking this morning, the lines came to me :

“ ’Tis but for a moment’s space,  
Ending in eternal peace.”

Looking up the hymn, found it was 273, which brought back my old promise: “ O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted,” etc. and seemed confirming.

*June 28th* Went to bed distressed as to whether there could be forgiveness for such a sinner. Waking in the night, and thinking about the parable on our forgiving others, that word came and abode with me to my comfort: “ I forgave thee *all* that debt”—ten thousand talents as against a hundred pence (Matthew xviii. 32).

*July 14th* Felt the need of more unreserved submission to the enfeeblement of old age, and sought the Lord to "manage all, by the way and to the end."

*July 21st*

"O may I patiently endure  
My heavenly Father's will!"

(664)

good to me in evening as expressing my desire, but feeling to want the sacred relationship confirmed.

*July 22nd* After an evening of conflict, the words came with encouragement: "Bids you still seek" (804). O to be one of Christ's sheep!

*July 29th* "God if over all Thou art" (1077). Feel to need to hold fast to this truth, as well as to have the heart of stone removed.

*August 8th* "The Lord shall be thy confidence" (Proverbs iii. 26), came with some power. How one needs to hold fast to this and not cast it away in unbelief! (Hebrews x. 35).

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### THE LOVE OF CHRIST

*An extract from a sermon by Ralph Erskine (1685-1752)*

O glorious Lover! the Son of God! *He* loved me. A person of no mean quality. Love is grateful to us from any person, but the greater and worthier the person, the dearer and more grateful must his love be to us. But who so great as He who is the Son of God, of equal dignity and greatness with His eternal Father; the King eternal and immortal, without beginning and without end; the Prince of the kings of the earth; He who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; He that hath upon His vesture and upon His thigh this Name written, King of kings and Lord of lords? This is the Lover; and His love must of necessity be greater than any other love, for He Himself is the greatest of all. The quality of the person doth commend His exceeding great love. O, who is this Lover "that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah"? This that is "glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength"? Who is this King of glory? Who but God manifested in the flesh, and whose going forth was of old, from everlasting, who is the true God and eternal life? O, who can declare His generation, who is the only-begotten of the Father, whose Name is Jehovah our righteousness, whose Name is I AM THAT I AM, whose Name is Emmanuel, God with us? *He* is the Person loving.

He loved; and He loved *because* He loved. There is no other reason of His love *but* His love. "Jacob have I loved"; this is all the reason. Love in God is God Himself loving, and therefore it must have all the qualities that belong to the nature of God.

God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Therefore His love must be a pure and spiritual love, an infinite and boundless love, eternal and unchangeable love. He loved. O, this act is glorious like Himself. His love must be an infinitely wise love, for He is wisdom; a powerful love, able to bring about all His lovely designs that infinite wisdom contrives. It must be infinitely holy love, love accompanied with holiness, love accompanied with justice, love accompanied with goodness and truth. He is an infinitely true and faithful Lover, and hence whom He loves, He loves unto the end.

As His love is accompanied with all divine perfections, so with all loving offices. As a Prophet, His love is teaching love, instructing love, enlightening love, directing, counselling, and conducting love. As a Priest, His love is justifying and pardoning love, reconciling, peace-making, and accepting love. As a King, His love is soul-conquering, sin-subduing love. As a Shepherd, His love is leading and feeding love. As a Surety, His love is debt-paying love. As Mediator between God and man, His love is interposing and interceding love. His love is suited to His nature as God-Man. As God, there is divinity in it; it is divine love. And as Man, there is humanity in it; it is a human and natural love. And as God-Man in one person, His love must be a divinely human and humanly divine love.

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### CONFIDENCE IN TIME OF DANGER

*Prayer Meeting Address by Mr. J. Harwood at Galeed Chapel  
Brighton, on the National Day of Prayer, May 26th, 1940.*

“Trust in Him at all times, ye people, pour out your heart before Him; God is a Refuge for us. Selah” (Psalm lxii. 8).

In the anxious days we have experienced since the outbreak of war, nothing has gladdened us more than the request of our King to turn in the day of our trouble, as our fathers did, to God. God has often heard and answered prayer; and He has made ungodly people to know that there is a secret efficacy in the exercise of true prayer. Mary, Queen of Scots, feared the prayers of John Knox more than an army of soldiers; and God many a time has turned away the enemies of His people and the enemies of this nation in response to their appeal to Him. There is one thing we need to remember, and that is: if God in answer to our prayers should avert our ruin as a nation, it will not be because of any merit in our prayers, but because God has honoured the use of the appointed means of grace. Perhaps there is a tendency in some directions where the fear of God is not known to feel that now the day has been set apart for prayer, there is sure to be on account of that very thing an interposition. Praying people know

best that there is no merit or efficacy in their petitions: whatever successes, whatever answers, whatever deliverances are wrought, they are wrought through Him who receives our petitions, takes away the sin of them and adds to them the merits of His precious blood. It is very supporting to remember the value of the Saviour's intercession. Without the Spirit's inditing, without the Saviour's intercession, how empty would our words be!

In thinking on this point on Friday evening, I came across an extract from Bunyan's *Holy War* so much to the point that I made a note of it, wondering if it might be useful to-day, and I will read it. It is in connection with Mansoul in the day of her distress; a petition had been drawn up to Emmanuel, and a question arose as to the person by whom it should be sent. "Now," says Bunyan, "there was an old man in the town, and his name was Mr. Good-deed, a man that bore only the name but had nothing of the nature of the thing. Some were for sending him; but the Recorder was by no means for that; 'For,' said he, 'We now stand in need of, and are pleading for mercy. Wherefore to send our petition by a man of his name will seem to cross the petition itself, should we make Mr. Good-deed our messenger when our petition cries for mercy. Besides,' quoth the old gentleman, 'should the Prince say now, as He receives the petition, "Ask him and say, What is thy name?" (and nobody knows but what He will) and he should say, "Old Good-deed," what think you would Emmanuel say but this, "Ay, is old Good-deed yet alive in Mansoul? Then let old Good-deed save you from your distresses." And if He says so, I am sure we are lost, nor can a thousand of old Good-deeds save Mansoul.'"

In our prayers to-day there has been—and may there ever be—the pleading of suppliants undeserving of mercy, and yet feeling that we cannot live without that mercy. In the words which I have read, we have the testimony of a man, himself a king, who had seen a very great deal of trouble indeed, and out of his own experience, he was enabled by divine direction to give this word of encouragement to people who were in trouble: "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him; God is a Refuge for us." David encouraged trust in God in the worst of times; and this is an evil day, and a very serious time for us each. It has been heavy upon our hearts, constant in our thoughts; we have seen the peril gradually drawing nearer, with all the devastation of helpless but free people; and our hearts have bled and we have wondered how soon it might happen to us. Fear for our liberties, especially our religious liberties, fear for our families or our homes, and all that is dear to us, both as Englishmen and as Christians, has made it a very heavy time indeed; but what a mercy if we are enabled and should be favoured, in the days that are upon us, to trust in the Lord! That trust would not be misplaced, nor would it be in vain; He delivered His people Israel again

and again when everything seemed to indicate that they were lost. In our nation we have seen the scattering and destruction of the Spanish Armada; and about 136 years ago our coasts were threatened again by an invasion by the French. Prayer was called, at least through the Nonconformist causes of this land, and that trouble was averted by God's powerful providence. Even in our own individual lives there have been troubles which have been very heavy to us; and we have never found peace of conscience, never found resignation to God's will, never found that blessed drawing near to God with confidence until there has been raised up and drawn out a spirit of vital gospel trust in the Lord our God. Might I say here in regard to personal cases, that if there is a sinner with guilt upon his conscience, hope deferred, the fear of death heavy upon him, his unpreparedness to meet God, it is one of the worst times in your estimation, your position is solemn, but God does speak this word; and if He should speak it into your heart, this occasion of your fear will be the moment when you shall realise that peace that flows into the conscience when trust is reposed in the finished work of the Son of God.

"Ye people, pour out your hearts before Him." God does not forbid Christian communion and conversation. He often is pleased to own it and to make use of it for our mutual benefit. But if we pour out our case only to our fellow-believers or to others, we come short. "Ye people pour out your hearts before God," He who only is able to save and to bless; pour them out before Him. The pouring out of a vessel would be the emptying of a vessel; and it is our mercy to be emptied in our petitions at the throne of grace. Or if I put it in another way, it is to make a full disclosure of our case, to tell Him the whole of our sad malady and distress, our fears and our hopes, what He has shown us, as we hope, and what we hope He will do for us, whether national, or in the church, or for us personally.

"God is a Refuge for us." It is very wonderful that the holy God should condescend to reveal Himself, and prove by His covenant that He is a Refuge for sinners. He has been a Refuge for the oppressed more than once in the history of the world. When we think of the oppression of the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Danes, and the peoples of the Low Countries, our hearts bleed for them; they suffer oppression. I hope that this day in our history will be a day which shall remain as a turning point in the strength of a ruthless aggressor, when God shall weaken his strength, and throw back his evil deeds with their solemn consequences upon him, and once more appear as a Refuge for defenceless people. But is He a Refuge for us in our personal experiences? Perhaps it is as well to enquire whether He has ever been a Refuge for us? When He has drawn us to the throne of grace and there, with a broken heart, we have been helped to lay all the matter before Him, what a Refuge He was for us there!

When He has opened up some doctrine of revelation, given us some view of the Son of God, some application of the atoning sacrifice, He was a Refuge for us then; and when He is experimentally known as a Refuge, He will never cease to be a Refuge. God's people shall never need a refuge to shelter them, for He has been, He is, and He will be their Refuge until time shall be no more, and they shall enjoy His presence and blessing through eternity.

May God favour us to meet in quietness, and command His anointing grace.

[The Lord in mercy *did* hear the prayers of His godly remnant in 1940. May a spirit of prayer be granted in this even more solemn day.]

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### I. Accepting a New Church Member

*A case having arisen in which an application for church membership was unanimously received, only to be followed by complaints by some of the members that the candidate was unsuitable, Mr. Philpot was asked whether such conduct was consistent. In his answer, he deals with the larger issue of the procedure that should be followed when an application is made.*

A little honesty at first often saves a deal of trouble afterwards. We certainly think that the members who were not satisfied with the experience of the candidate should have expressed their opinion at the time. Their silence gave an implied assent that they were satisfied. They were at liberty to ask the candidate questions, or hold up their hand against him; as they did neither, it was taken for granted that they were as well satisfied as the rest. It is indispensable to all comfortable walking as a church that when a member is once received, he should be treated as a brother as much as the most experienced member in the church.

Let every precaution be adopted in receiving members. Here many churches err. We are not friendly to the rejection of candidates when once they come before the church as it casts a stigma on them before the congregation, may much wound and distress their minds, and cause strife and division among the members. To avoid these obvious evils, many churches are too lenient, and reject none who can give a little account of themselves, which they would hardly receive as individuals, thus filling the church with unsatisfactory members, gradually destroying the very salt of the body, and sowing a mingled seed in that field where there should be none but pure grain.

To avoid this, great precaution is necessary in the first instance; and no candidate should be allowed to come forward who cannot show some clear marks of the work of God upon His

soul. Assuming that there should be three doors into the church—the minister, the visitors [usually the deacons], and the church itself, let the first be the narrowest, and no one should pass that barrier who is not well commended to the minister's conscience. But as *he* may be deceived, let the next gate be carefully guarded also, as it is far better for the candidate to be kindly and gently put back by being told to wait than to be rejected by the church, or even admitted, if not abundantly satisfactory to the main body.

But when once received, unless his walk and conversation be inconsistent with his profession, let the new member be treated in all points as a brother. He may be weak; and so is the little finger, but still it is a member of the body. Many have come into the church upon an experience of the least possible kind to give them admission at all; but they have grown, and some of these have been, from their quietness and consistency, ornaments of the church in life, and have made a good end. "Backbitings and whisperings" (2 Cor. xii. 20) are among the things the apostle disapproves of. No church can thrive without love and union; and as these can only be maintained by much mutual forbearance, so nothing more tends to break them than such dishonest conduct as our correspondent mentions.

[J. C. Philpot's *Answers to Inquiries* appeared in the *Gospel Standard* during the years 1850 to 1866. We believe that under the blessing of God, they were made of great use in establishing the churches in gospel order. Mr. Philpot showed much wisdom and grace in his answers. He never shrank from any difficulty, dealt fully and openly with each question, sought to lay everything on a Scriptural basis, and often dealt with some important wider issue that was implied in the question.

We hope that the republication of a few of these "Answers" will both glorify God and be a help to the churches.]

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## THE DEAF AND DUMB DISCIPLE

*The Conversion, Experience and Triumphant Death of John Paddy*

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(This remarkable account was written by Richard de Fraine in 1850. Mr. de Fraine was for over 40 years pastor at the Strict Baptist Chapel, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, where his ministry was much blessed. It is recorded of his preaching that "he constantly exalted a precious Christ, and laid the sinner low." It was Mr. de Fraine who was made such a blessing to Mr. J. K. Popham, instructing him in the way of God more perfectly. Mr. Popham was baptized by him and received a member of the church at Lutterworth in 1868. Mr. de Fraine died on February 19th, 1882, aged 79.)

My young friend, John Paddy, was born in the year 1823, and was deaf and dumb, in early life painfully manifesting that he was born in sin, and conceived in iniquity; yet, from the affectionate influence of God-fearing parents and friends, he was preserved from those outward acts of immorality common to youth. His natural

affliction, acting upon the feelings of his kind parents, caused him to be the subject of much anxiety to them, and many petitions were put up to the Lord for his temporal and eternal interest.

As he grew up, he shewed a natural taste for drawing, and he was sent to an establishment for the deaf and dumb at Edgbaston, near Birmingham. After remaining at school his term, he was placed with other respectable parties, improving in his profession, and much respected by a circle of affectionate friends. He always referred with gratitude to their kind and tender regard, and would express himself as under great obligation to the devoted gentleman under whose care and instruction he was placed at Edgbaston.

While at school he had many natural convictions for sin, and was very miserable when he thought of death and judgment. He had also many singular dreams that much exercised his mind, but all his strong convictions were like "the morning cloud and early dew." Being of a natural lively and engaging disposition, a company of young friends and an hour of youthful vanity would drown his anxieties about eternal things; and, as he told me, though he was always trying to do good, and to be good, he did nothing but evil.

Our young friend came home from Birmingham in the autumn of 1846, and was anxious to go to Paris for improvement; but good Kent says:

"There is a period known to God  
When all His sheep, redeemed by blood,  
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,  
Turn to the fold, and enter in."

J.P. was poorly in health when he came home, and his kind friends advised him to continue at home for a time to benefit his health; and as relaxation from study was needful, he consented to continue with his friends.

In a few weeks his friends were surprised at the evident alteration in his manner. He appeared very solemn and thoughtful, and often retired to his room. His God-fearing father and sister (his dear mother had been dead some years) watched him, and saw him upon his knees, pouring out his soul before the Lord in prayer; and who but parents and friends that truly fear the Lord can enter into their feelings, when they saw this dear youth earnestly pleading with the Lord, by signs, for pardon and forgiveness?

His dear friends were melted into tears of joy and thankfulness to the God of all grace at the sight, and very soon the subject was named to me. I must confess I was very jealous lest parental kindness should lead them to think more favourably of him than of another in the same state of mind. I therefore determined to receive nothing but what I received directly from himself. His dear sister offered to put any question to him I

wished to ask. I said, "Ask him if he would object to correspond with me?" He replied, he should feel a pleasure to receive a note from me. The next day I wrote some very plain and searching questions in reference to his views, feelings, and state of mind. In a day or two he sent me a very honest reply, which led me to hope the good work was begun in him, yet I was not satisfied, and I resolved at once to learn the method of communication used by the deaf and dumb. The deep interest I took in my dear young friend caused me to master this in a few days without his knowing it until I put the first question by sign to him. He wept when he saw the interest I took in him, and was ready to open all his mind to me as a minister and friend.

His health caused some anxiety, and the physician to the family was consulted. He gave it as his opinion that there was a cavity in the left lung, and that he was consumptive. It was thought prudent for him to remain at home. We often met, and walked out for reading and communication. The Word of God and Mr. Gadsby's Selection of Hymns were our books of reference.

From communication with him, I learned the Lord was shewing him much of the evil of sin, and the depravity of his nature. He would reply in answer to my questions, "I am nothing but sin, and quite helpless; if ever I am saved it must be all of free grace alone." As we were walking one morning, I felt my soul drawn forth to the Lord in prayer that He would be pleased to give me a testimony from him that I might receive him into my heart as a man of God. I took the hymn-book and opened it upon that beautiful and well-known hymn :

"Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

I gave the book open to my friend, and said, "Now, John, if you can find any thing in this hymn that exactly describes what the feelings of your soul are at this time, will you point it out to me?" He took the book, and with much feeling showed me two lines :

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
Thou of Life the Fountain art."

I immediately felt a union of soul to him as a child of God, and I loved him as a brother beloved of God, and taught by the Spirit of God.

It was early in the month of April, 1847, he signed to me, that his mind was much exercised about baptism by immersion, and signed, "Will you baptize me?" I was surprised at his question as I had never hinted the ordinance to him. When I questioned him upon the subject, I was astonished at his knowledge of it. He took the Word of God, turned to a great number of texts, and soon convinced me he understood the natural and spiritual signification of the ordinance of believer's baptism. Some kind friends suggested to him, "Would it be prudent in your delicate

state of health to be immersed in cold water?" His reply was, "The honour of Jesus in obeying His plain command is more important to me than either health or life." The church received his testimony of a work of grace upon his soul, and I baptized him on the first Lord's day in May, 1847; and the Lord gave him a precious visit at the ordinance. He had such a glorious manifestation of Christ that he was brought into the liberty of the gospel; his soul was filled with joy and peace, and "he went on his way rejoicing."

To witness this dear devoted young friend in a very poor state of health, standing at the water, a monument of mercy, and although deaf and dumb, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, made hard hearts to melt; and it was a time of love long to be remembered by many of the Lord's people.

After this, our friend was much better in health, happy in the Lord, very zealous for the truth, manifesting much love to the Lord's children, especially to the poor of the flock, and was truly beloved by all that knew him. When his health would permit, he was very punctual in attending the means. His sister gave him the hymns and the text, and would sign to him a great part of the sermon. If he was confined at home, he would have the same signed to him when his dear friends returned from the house of God. He was deeply concerned for the spiritual interest of his brothers and sisters, and I am a living witness to many earnest petitions put up to the Lord on their behalf. May it please the Lord to answer them in their spiritual conversion to God.

*(To be continued)*

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### BOOK NOTICE

**Contemplations on the Sufferings, Death and Resurrection of Christ**, by Augustus Montague Toplady; cloth bound with coloured photograph on dust jacket; 116 pages; price 75p; obtainable from Gospel Standard Publications.

"My meditation of Him shall be sweet," wrote the inspired Psalmist, and surely there can be no sweeter, more sacred theme for meditation than the Person and work of the dear Redeemer. The writer of these *Contemplations* was much favoured with this spirit of meditation. Was it not he who could sing (even "when languor and disease invade"):

*"Sweet to reflect how grace divine  
My sins on Jesus laid;  
Sweet to remember that His blood  
My debt of suffering paid"?*

Toplady's *Contemplations* are full of Christ. The five chapters are: Christ our Passover; The Sufferings and Death of Christ; the Resurrection of Christ; The General Resurrection; and a most earnest, solemn and profitable "Application" based on 1 Sam. vi. 20: "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

Augustus Toplady writes in the polite, formal style that was customary two hundred years ago. One must not look for the terseness of Ryle or the homely briskness of Huntington. But occasionally the poet breaks

through, and the refined prose ascends almost to poetry. "That joyful and ever memorable morning when our omnipotent Redeemer burst the inclosure of the tomb; when the sepulchre could no longer detain its illustrious prisoner; and when the Sun of Righteousness, who had so lately set in darkness, triumphantly emerged from His sad though short eclipse and rose to set no more" (p. 46). This is the language of a poet.

Toplady's strong point is *thorough soundness on every aspect of truth*. On interpretation of Scripture, we cannot always go with him. For instance: he asserts that a lamb was chosen for the passover as a rebuke to the Egyptians because they worshipped lambs (p. 6); he states that "the lily among thorns" is a prophecy that Jesus should wear a crown of thorns; and also that the thorns were artificial, made of iron (p. 30). These are just examples. But on divine truth, he is clear as the midday sun. The book is not essentially doctrinal, yet how clearly here and there does he touch on precious aspects of truth. For instance, on the relationship of the resurrection to the believer's justification:

"His resurrection is matter of endless consolation to believers as it was a proof that the sacrifice of Himself, which He offered to God, and the atonement He made for our offences, was accepted in the court of heaven.

"Temporal death, no less than eternal, is the wages of sin; and Christ being sinless could not have died if He had not graciously taken our sins upon Himself and engaged to expiate them. And as He died in a public capacity as our Substitute, so He rose again in a public capacity as our Representative. He was delivered for our offences, says St. Paul, and raised again for our justification; inasmuch as He thereby gave the finishing hand to our redemption, and proved that His sufferings answered the end for which He underwent them, and that by them, and our transgressions were cancelled and our iniquities done away. Whereas, supposing Christ had not risen, we could have had no solid reason to conclude that He had fully satisfied His Father's justice for the sins of men. The merit of His death, and His reconciliation of His people unto God, could only be evidenced by the release of Christ their Surety from the prison of the tomb" (pp. 51-52).

One most solemn point that is seen is the excruciating nature of the Lord's sufferings. It seemed more than we could bear to read the details of the bodily agonies of the Lord Jesus in His crucifixion. "How dear that great salvation cost, That comes to us so free!"

Interspersed throughout are over forty hymns (by various authors). Toplady himself needs no recommendation as a hymnwriter. He combines divine truth with sublime thought and poetic fervour and a holy desire to exalt Christ. But how many of the hymns that appear are his compositions, it is impossible to say. The *Contemplations* were never edited for publication by the author. They were found among his manuscripts after his death and published by Walter Row, Editor of the *Gospel Magazine*. Some of the hymns can be identified as written by Watts, Hart, Wesley, and others. There is an interesting and full version of "Thy mercy, my God is the theme of my song"; a different translation of "Now I have found the ground"; an unusual combination of parts of "Hark! the herald angels" and "Christ the Lord is risen today." The theme throughout is in keeping with the five essays. There is a high pitch of assurance, and a solemn emphasis that He who died on the cross is God. One precious verse begins the hymn, "Pleading the Atonement" (p. 59):

"Father, God, who seest in me  
Only sin and misery,  
Turn to Thy anointed One,  
Look on Thy beloved Son;  
Him, and then the sinner see,  
Look through Jesus' wounds on me."

Interest is added to the book by retaining at the end 144 "Sterling Sentiments," as they were quaintly described in the original publication. These are short pithy statements of truth, some almost proverbs, that apparently Toplady had collected in his manuscripts. They vary in quality. Some are of real value and weight. Examples are:

"Repentance is the gift of God; we can never weep for sin till He gives us tears" (27).

"As a skilful physician, from a variety of herbs and plants, some of which are by their own nature poisonous, by a judicious mixture of them together compounds medicines for the use of man; so God causes all things, even those which are seemingly hurtful, to conspire for the good of His elect" (40).

"Prosperity in Scripture is compared to a candle, and many have burnt their wings about this candle" (83).

A lovely coloured picture appears on the dust jacket—of the Devonshire village of Broad Hembury with its quaint cottages and narrow main street. In the background rises the square tower of the church where Toplady was vicar for several years.

We hope that this little book may be made of real spiritual profit. It is a book for the spiritual reader. May those who read be favoured

"To gaze on this deep so profound,  
And tread whilst they taste of the bliss,  
With reverence the hallowed ground."

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### OBITUARY

**Sarah Elizabeth Buggs** of Tanners Farm, Capel, Kent, member of the church at East Peckham, died on January 21st, 1971, aged 70.

From a child she was brought up by her good parents to attend the Strict Baptist chapel at Matfield Green. She was possessed of a quiet sensitive nature and was unusually kept from the vanities of this world, seeming to have little desire for them. One of her sisters writes:

Our dear sister's first impression of eternal realities occurred when at school. She and a French girl were boarders sharing the same room. After they had spent a happy day together, the little French girl passed away in her sleep that night. This terribly shocked my sister. She realised how soon life could end; also the feeling, "Am I ready to meet God?" struck her with terror and brought on a deep concern for the Lord to have mercy upon her never-dying soul. Under the preached word at Matfield she had a righteous desire implanted in her soul.

In 1925 she married Maurice Buggs of Church Farm, Capel, and was to him a truly devoted and gracious helpmeet. It was a privilege to her to attend family worship in her dear father-in-law's home nearby. She said many a time his prayers entered into her feelings, causing a soft heart before the Lord. These were precious times to her. Once being very cast down in soul the Lord lifted her up by applying the words: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." On another occasion she and her dear husband were preparing for a holiday in Holland. The thought of crossing the sea gave her great concern, feeling she was wrong in her religion and that being so, the boat would sink. The Lord removed this temptation from her by applying the words, "I will go in the strength of the Lord." They went and spent a happy time with their godly friends, returning in safety with gratitude. It was a great disappointment to her not having a family and caused her many errands to the throne of grace as to why it was so. The dear Lord answered her with the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee." She sometimes said there was consolation in that there were none to leave behind who might be eternally lost. On another occasion she was stilled by the words, "Ye are not your

own," and "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." In 1937 she was led to cast in her lot with the Lord's people. She was baptized by Mr. E. Roe at Matfield, under whose ministry she was greatly blessed. Later she transferred to East Peckham where she remained a loving and faithful member until her end.

She was very reticent to speak much of herself, fearing to presume, but displayed a quiet humble spirit, always ready to think of others rather than herself. She was known for her liberality. Truly she was a woman of secret prayer and many were her errands to the throne of grace to enquire of the Lord. She often spoke to the writer of the "warfare"—how almost invariably after the Lord had favoured her in her soul this was followed by a trial, adding that it must be so to prove the reality of such favours.

For some time before her end, she said she was holding things here with a loose hand. How painfully, but one should say how blessedly, this proved to be the case! Appearing very quiet one day, her younger sister asked if she felt well. She replied, "I have had a foretaste of heaven." Her countenance was beautiful.

During the last few years she suffered much and in December, 1970, became really ill with a septic foot that would not heal. The pain was sometimes intense. She had a dread of being left to murmur but said Hymn 707 (Gadsby's), "When pining sickness wastes the frame," was made precious to her. She had always had a dread of operations but after the surgeon had visited her and said an operation was imperative, she remarked that she "was kept quiet." The next day, December 28th, she entered a nursing home and underwent the operation, which was successful in that the foot healed. After three weeks the doctors allowed her home to convalesce, where everything was prepared for her comfort. She was full of the Lord's goodness, and when a nephew quoted, "For mercies countless as the sands," she went on to say,

"Alas from such a heart as mine,  
What can I bring Him forth?  
My best is stained and dyed with sin,  
My all is nothing worth."

The fear of death seemed taken from her, her only concern being for her dear husband, feeling she would perhaps soon be taken from him. This proved to be the case. On January 21st, 1971, she suddenly fell asleep in Jesus, leaving her husband, five sisters and the family circle to mourn their great loss.

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wake to weep." F.B.B.

**Ruth Brooks**, member of the church at Zion Chapel, Brabourne, passed peacefully away at Tunbridge Wells on January 31st, 1971, aged 81. She attended at Brabourne all her life and was baptized there in October, 1922.

Little is recorded of her experience, but it is evident she was the subject of a work of grace from her early days. When about the age of 17, when a young woman she worked with died, her prayer was :

"Prepare me, gracious God,  
To stand before Thy face."

In 1913, she married George Brooks; they walked together in the things of God, but he was killed in action in France, October, 1918. Being left a widow for many years, she walked a lonely pathway and knew many trials and low places, but she was a woman of prayer who watched for answers. Mr. Croft's ministry was the means of a special help at one time, when she was in a low condition, from the text: "Fear not, worm Jacob"; also Mr. Curtis at Tunbridge Wells from: "I do set

my bow in the cloud." While about her home once, the words : " Because I live, ye shall live also," were applied with sweetness and power, a time she often looked back on.

In 1968, she sustained a stroke which was accepted with sweet submission to the Lord's will. She loved the Lord's house, and was found there under all conditions when possible, and esteemed the Lord's servants very highly. Although of an unassuming nature, she was a true mother in Israel, a gracious example to her family. Her mortal remains were laid to rest in Brabourne Chapel graveyard on February 5th, 1971.

G. and N.B.

**Florrie Ruse**, a consistent member of the church at Hope Chapel, Stotfold, passed away on September 25th, 1971, at the Bethesda Home, Harpenden (where she had gone for a short stay), aged 85 years. She joined the church at Cambridge in 1935 and transferred to us in 1952.

When the Lord began with her, she scarce knew what was the matter. She seemed crushed right down and felt like Bunyan's pilgrim (she said) with a load on her, so that she could not get on. She could not eat; she knew not what to do. Then these words came: "Hope thou in God." But visiting her sister she was brought again into solemn exercise about her soul and eternity and feared she would be for ever in the pit. She could only cry, "O Lord, in wrath remember mercy." Gently the Lord led her on, applying hope and comfort to her soul under the ministry and while about her daily duties with several portions of Scripture and lines of hymns. She felt led to follow the Lord in the ordinance of believer's baptism, and returning home after going through the water, as she went up the stairs, she was favoured with a sweet glimpse of her Jesus on the cross and these words: "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." She said with tears flowing down her cheeks, "What a merciful God to such a poor sinner!" She often referred to the words: "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," which she had applied to her later. Despite her age she persevered to be at all the services.

Mr. Tomkins conducted the funeral service at Hope Chapel, Stotfold, and Mr. Buck the committal at Wicken Bonhunt churchyard. Our loss as a little church is her eternal gain.

The Deacons.

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The way to heaven is not to be lined out like a railroad, but traced through all its windings like a path through a wood. I don't know whether I would sooner hear doctrine preached that a cut-and-dry experience, so regularly laid out as though the all-wise and wonder-working Jehovah must needs move in a line chalked out by a worm. He never made our natural faces alike, nor created two flowers nor two leaves precisely similar; nor do I believe that we can find two vessels of mercy dealt with precisely in the same way.

*J. C. Philpot*

Some make faith, others repentance and new obedience, the strict and proper condition of the new covenant. But if we will not shut our eyes, we may see that Christ's obedience, suffering, and satisfaction is the only proper, and strictly so called, condition thereof. The parties of the covenant of grace are God and Christ, Christ answering for all the elect therein. Now the condition of the covenant must be a condition performable and fulfilled by one of the parties, namely Christ. And the condition is that He, in His obedience unto death, become a sacrifice to the sword of divine justice; and upon this condition all spiritual and eternal blessings are promised to the elect. Faith, repentance, and all good are promised upon this ground; for, says God, upon His making His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed.

*Ralph Erskine*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

FEBRUARY, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## THE BLESSING OF JOSEPH

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. Harwood at Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon, on Thursday evening, 19th May, 1955.*

**Text:** "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob" (Gen. xlix. 22-24).

When the Lord Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, He gathered His disciples to Him and blessed them, and was taken up into heaven in the very act of blessing. When Jacob had intimation of the near approach of his death, he gathered his sons together, as he said, that he might tell them that which should befall them in the last days, encouraging them, or exhorting them, to hear and to hearken to what he said. Then he blessed his sons according to the blessing that God directed him to, and after he had given very minute directions as to his burial, "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

There are two very important differences between the Lord Jesus and Jacob. Jacob, having finished the blessings upon his sons that he was directed to, gathered up his feet into his bed and died. That was the most that he could do. The Lord Jesus was parted from His disciples, and so from His church in the earth as to His bodily presence, and was taken up into heaven in the very act of blessing His people, as if to intimate that He carries on, as we verily believe He does, the work of blessing from the courts of heaven above. The other important difference is that Jacob's body was gathered to his fathers, whereas the sacred body of our Lord Jesus Christ was taken up into heaven, and there, as glorified in His Person, He exercises all His offices.

When we read, as we do here, of the blessing wherewith Jacob blessed his sons, "every one according to his blessing, he blessed them," we are not to think that this expressed just his fatherly affection, concern or interest for them. When he gathered them together, it was that he might tell them that which should befall them in the last days; and this neither he nor any other man could do apart from the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. So

that the blessings that he pronounced upon his sons were those to which he was directed and influenced by God the Holy Spirit, blessings that were not simply wishes, but blessings which were accomplished in the after history of their tribes until the coming of Christ. And when we read that Jacob blessed his sons, and then read his remarks which he addressed to Reuben and to Simeon and to Levi, and notice with what pain he spoke, and how deeply he detested the sins that his sons had been guilty of, and what the consequences of those sins would be in their tribal life, there seems little, if any, blessing. Yet the blessing appears if we recollect that, base though those men were, and bitterly as they distressed their father, they were not cut off from their inheritance, they were not removed from the blessing that came upon the nation of Israel as a whole according to their tribes.

The greatest blessing seems to have been reserved for Judah, for not only was he prospered naturally, but there was given to him the prophecy, in the nature of a blessing, that "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come"—that is, the Person of the Messiah, the incarnate Son of God; "and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." That was indeed the greatest blessing pronounced upon any of the sons of Israel in his old age.

But the blessings he pronounced upon Joseph were very choice, and they were very rich. These blessings descended upon Joseph through the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons. According to the blessing they were numerous, they were wealthy, they were influential. But what has struck us in the reading of this blessing, and especially the text, is that Jacob refers to Joseph's past life and the favour of God upon him, sustaining him, raising him to the position he occupied in Egypt.

There is a sense in which we may view this passage as typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He above all others is a fruitful bough, a bough that is planted by a well; the branches of this Vine run over the wall, the wall that separates the Jew and the Gentile. Certainly He was grieved as He was shot at by His enemies; but He was sustained to the end, and was more than conqueror because of His own obedience unto death. But it seems more according to the analogy of Scripture to understand what is here said of Joseph as being typical of the character and experience of the living people of God in their trials and in their circumstances. It is in this light that we would desire wisdom and grace to view it.

The first thing to be noticed here is Joseph as typical of the people of God in *his character*, what he was by the grace of God. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall." Now, the very name, Joseph, is significant. It comes from a Hebrew word meaning, Addition, or, To be added to. Whether Rachel had some intimation of the

future prosperity of her firstborn son Joseph, we cannot tell; but certainly the name which she gave to him was indicative in the purposes of God of the prosperity which attended him and his successors through the ages. Moses, in pronouncing a blessing upon the tribes before his death, spoke of the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh, the successors of Joseph. And a child of God is added to, his name spiritually meaning, Addition. In that religion that God gives to His people there is growth, and there are communications. The life of God in the soul is not static. There is growth in it, not from ourselves but from Him who is the Author of the life that He gives. Sometimes we may mourn because we are not conscious of any growth, but there is a growing downwards as well as a growing upwards. I do not know that a child of God is the best judge of growth in himself. That which is strengthening to faith is when the Lord adds mercy upon mercy, favour upon favour, experience upon experience, so that he grows in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now his growth is made manifest in what is said. He is "a fruitful bough." The passage does not tell us to what tree Jacob is referring. He had a tree in mind, of course, because he spoke of a bough or a branch. But from his reference to the branches running over the wall it would seem that he had in mind the vine, for that is characteristic of the vine, and certainly it is scriptural; and the vine, or the branch of the vine, is what it is because it is derived from the stock of the vine, and therefore could not be anything else than a branch of the vine, because of its vital connection with it. So in the character of God's people there is this to be seen and believed: that a sinner is a child of God, not by something that he has accomplished, but by reason of a secret and open union with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bough is what it is because of what Christ is to His people. He is spoken of as a fruitful bough; and no sinner can be fruitful in the things of God without a living abiding in Christ the Vine. The Saviour, addressing His disciples on the eve of His sufferings and departure, used a very choice parable when He said, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Now in the professing church of Christ there are *unfruitful branches*. If it were not so, the Saviour would not have said so. And O the distress that these references to the unfruitful branches have caused to the living people of God! For very often the people of God themselves are seriously troubled as to whether they are not unfruitful branches and will suffer the same terrible judgment and be taken away.

There are two things that have given me some consolation in

this exercise of mind. The one is: in much mercy He has not cut me off; and the other is a fervent desire, a prayerful desire to be made fruitful, to be blessed and made a blessing.

Now fruitfulness is the result not only of union with Christ but of the purging and the pruning. This is painful to us because it affects us intimately and closely; yet if the issue be to make us more fruitful, we would seek grace to bow in submission, begging for grace to be patient to see the fruits of His wisdom and His kindness though the trial be bitter.

Fruitfulness in a child of God is not natural. Jacob is not speaking of fruit in a natural sense so much as a spiritual sense. And what are the fruits that indicate a fruitful branch? Not leaves, but fruit. A godly sense of sin, sorrow because of it, and fear of sin, is a gracious fruit that is found where grace prevails. It is one thing to be sorry that our sin has found us out; it is another thing to live in a gracious fear of sin and hatred of it because of what sin has cost the Saviour. Where sin is rightly felt, the time comes—it has come to some—when they know that gracious, indescribable experience in which they disclaim all hope of salvation in themselves and look alone to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, depending upon His blood and righteousness.

Gracious exercise in prayer and waiting upon God is the fruit of His grace; a desire to live in the fear of God, separate from the world in principle and in practice; communion and fellowship with God in Christ by the gracious influences of the Spirit, and a living communion with the people of God, not only in social things but in spiritual things. It is a great mercy when it can be said of a poor sinner through grace that he is a fruitful bough, when his fruit is added to by a gracious increase of the fruits of the Spirit.

The explanation for this fruitfulness is: it is *planted by a well*. In the eastern countries where rain is less frequent than in our own country, a constant supply of moisture to the roots is essential for a healthy vine. Without it it could not be profitable. Jacob pronounces upon Joseph that he is a fruitful bough *planted by a well*. Now this is true spiritually and experimentally of the people of God. The source of their fruitfulness is not in themselves. It is in a well, unseen by natural eyes, secret to reason, but the source of faith of all that fruitfulness that is discovered in the sight of God in the souls and lives of His people. This well, I have said, is not in ourselves. God said by His servant, "From Me is thy fruit found"; and it is from the fulness of Christ, and from the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, that the souls of the people of God are made fruitful and tender in the fear of God.

But this truth is stated or attested to in the Scriptures. In the very first Psalm, which some of us had to learn in our youth, but which we now know, we hope, in experience: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit

in his season. His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The Saviour also spoke to the woman of Samaria, after He had spoken to her about her sad condition, which issued in her salvation: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, for the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." There is such an efficacy in the grace that is in Christ that, communicated by the Spirit, it springs up, and the root of grace in the soul strikes down into this abundant source of life and of faith and every blessing. We would not be like some people who seem in their profession of religion to be able to manage without supplies of grace from Christ, and without the gracious assistance and operations of the Holy Spirit. Why, we feel such a sense of barrenness and dependence that, if it were not for the hope that grace will be communicated and the Spirit be our Teacher, we should have to despair of His help altogether. But the fruitful bough of a child of God has in secret an abundant source of moisture which will never fail him.

The supply of grace is inexhaustible; so much so that *the branches run over the wall*. It is characteristic of the vine without support for its branches to trail the ground, where, of course, it would be trodden down and rendered useless; but given a wall or any other suitable support, it will fasten itself to it by those tendrils that may be seen and by other supports that may be given, so that it *runs over the wall* because it is prolific. Now it is characteristic of the fruitfulness of a child of God supplied by sources such as those that I have intimated; their fruitfulness depends for support upon Christ in His Person, in His work, in His grace, in His truth, in His offices. With such a support to faith as this, there is provision for their fruitfulness. For just as long as we are without dependence upon Christ, our branches will trail the ground. There will be such a carnality in it, and such damage to our profession as to cause us to be inwardly and outwardly distressed; but the mercy is that the Husbandman provides the wall in the Person and work of the Son, and the nature of the love of God in the soul is to cleave to this support and, cleaving to it, find strength and succour against the storms and the winds. Now if in these things we can humbly believe that we can trace a little of the Lord's gracious dealings with us, it is because the mighty God of Jacob has blessed us, and we must still look to Him for fruitfulness and for usefulness in our day and generation, according to the will of God.

But we want for a moment to look at Joseph *in his trials* as being typical of a child of God in his trials. "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him." One would scarcely have thought that such a character as the Scriptures show Joseph to be would have been the object of so much hatred

and so much persecution. But if we know what it is to be blessed by the same God, we shall have the explanation in our own soul's experience. It is true to say, and daily experience demonstrates it, that hatred is the root of all the opposition and persecution that a child of God suffers. Said the Saviour in His prayer to His Father, referring to His disciples, "I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them." For the Saviour to give us His Word is not to put the Scriptures in our hands; it is to put the grace and truth of the Scriptures in our hearts, assuring us that the world will hate us and, hating us, will shoot at us. The hatred of the world, profane and professing, to the truths that we profess, and to the effects of those truths upon our spirits and in our lives, is the occasion for the archers that shoot at us. The enemy of souls has not a scrap of love in his heart to the Lord's people or to their Saviour, and he shoots many a fiery dart at them. If it were not for the shelter of faith we must have been destroyed, but the Lord has not given us over unto death. The world, professing and profane, will shoot at us. At one time they will impugn our character, at another time they will question our motives, suggesting that our religion is simply sentimental, or is selfish, or for personal ends. They will take advantage of every folly to shoot an arrow at the child of God, and sometimes it is painfully true that even the children of God, when left to themselves, through jealousy or misrepresentation and pride will shoot an arrow at one another. But as it is said, Joseph was grieved; and if the blessing of the God of Jacob is in our hearts, and we have union with the living Vine, we too shall be deeply grieved. We shall not dismiss these things as if they were nothing. We shall be grieved for the dishonour that is cast upon the Name and truth and people of God. We feel it would not matter for ourselves if only ourselves were implicated, but such is the preciousness of Christ, and such the love we have to His truth and people, that the arrows of the archers have grieved.

Then it is a source of grief to see men so blinded by hatred and unbelief, to see them live in such a condition, because we know that if they die in that state, there can be no hope for their souls; but what gives us probably the most grief is that our failures and our mistakes, our infirmities and our inconsistencies, have provided arrows for the archers to shoot at us. Well, that is a painful part of the experience of the people of God.

But I do not want to leave it there, but to notice in the last place Joseph *in his preservation* as a type of the children of God *in their preservation*. "His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Here Jacob implies that as the archers had arrows, so had Joseph. "His bow abode in strength." But we do not read in the account of Joseph that he ever shot an arrow at his brethren

that so basely and unnaturally treated him. How kindly he spoke to them! How readily he assisted them in the day when they came for food, when they were wanting because of the famine! We do not read that he shot an arrow at that woman that so basely used him and would have robbed him of his character, and who was responsible for his prison experience when the word of the Lord tried him "until the time that His word came." No, he had a better use for the arrows of the bow, and that was to direct his prayer to God and to wait upon God; and in this he is typical of a child of God *in His preservation*. They too are furnished with weapons, but not to retaliate or to injure others. The weapon of their warfare in respect to those that would injure them is to wait upon God, to commit their cause to Him, to lay their matters, their trials, their griefs before the Lord at the mercy seat, begging of Him to undertake for them. They have arrows which they desire grace to use in the right use of Scripture, in pleading Scripture before the Lord, or in the use of Scripture for the purpose of reproof or of warning or of encouragement. This was the bow that abode in strength.

Not that I think Jacob's words would suggest that he was never discouraged because from the very brief account we have of Joseph in the Psalms, it would seem that he knew what it was to be discouraged, just as the people of God know what it is to be discouraged, deeply so, sometimes wondering where the scene will end. But there is one thing they do not do; they do not break up their bows nor cast their arrows away. They are retained, and by the mercy of God the grace of prayer and faith in the Scriptures abides in their souls, and their hands, the hands of their arms, are made strong by the mighty God of Jacob. Wisdom and strength are necessary in our spiritual exercises. We not only know it is right to pray, but we want grace to pray and faith in prayer and waiting upon God. It is the hands of the mighty God of Jacob that put this strength of faith in our souls. When we are just ready to feel we know not what to do, it gives direction to prayer. When we feel we cannot shoot, it gives us power to pull the bow of faith and shoot an arrowed petition to His mercy seat. Yes, the Lord does this for His people. If He did not, we could not rightly live and could not rightly die.

May it please the Lord to strengthen the arms of *our* faith from time to time, and make us fruitful, and bring us to our end to the praise of His grace!

The Lord add His blessing. Amen.

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A whole legion of devils could not touch one swine till Christ gave them leave.

Thomas Watson

## FORGIVENESS

*From a discourse by Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)*

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I shall open a box of cordials and show you some of the glorious privileges of a pardoned condition. This is a peculiar favour, it is a spring shut up and unsealed for none but the elect. The wicked may have forbearing mercy, but an elect person only has forgiving mercy. Forgiveness of sin makes way for solid joy. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem"; or, as in the Hebrew, "speak to her heart." What was to cheer her heart? "Cry unto her that her iniquity is pardoned." If anything would comfort her, the Lord knew it was this. When Christ would cheer the palsied man, He said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." It was a greater comfort to have his sins forgiven than to have his palsy healed. This made David put on his best clothes and anoint himself. His child was newly dead, and God had told him "the sword shall never depart from thy house"; yet now he spruces up himself, puts on his best clothes, and anoints himself. Whence was this? He had heard good news; God sent him pardon by the prophet Nathan. "The Lord hath put away thy sin." This could not but revive his heart and, in token of joy, he anointed himself. Philo says it was the opinion of some of the philosophers that among the heavenly spheres there was such sweet harmony that if the sound of it could reach our ears, it would affect us with wonder and delight. Surely he who is pardoned has such a divine melody in his soul as replenishes him with infinite delight. When Christ said to Mary Magdalene, "Thy sins are forgiven," He soon added, "Go in peace." More particularly:

1. God looks upon a pardoned soul as if he had never sinned. As cancelling a bond nulls the bond, and makes it as if the money had never been owing, so forgiving sin makes it not to be. Where sin is remitted, it is as if it had not been committed. So that as Rachel wept because her children were not, so a child of God may rejoice because his sins are not (Jer. 1. 20). God looks upon him as if he had never offended. Though sin remains in him after pardon, yet God does not look upon him as a sinner, but as a just man.

2. God having pardoned sin will pass an act of oblivion. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." When a creditor has crossed the book, he does not call for the debt again. God will not reckon with the sinner in a judicial way. When our sins are laid upon the head of Christ our Scapegoat, they are carried into a land of forgetfulness.

3. The pardoned soul is for ever secured from the wrath of God. How terrible is God's wrath! "Who knoweth the power

of Thy anger?" If a spark of God's wrath lighting upon a man's conscience fills it with such horror, what is it to be always scorched in that torrid zone, to lie upon beds of flames? Now, from this avenging wrath of God every pardoned soul is freed. Though he may taste the bitter cup of affliction, yet he shall never drink of the sea of God's wrath. "Being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." His blood quenches the flames of hell.

4. Sin being pardoned, conscience has no more authority to accuse. Conscience roars against the unpardoned sinner, but it cannot terrify or accuse him that is pardoned. God has discharged the sinner, and if the creditor discharge the debtor, what right has the sergeant to arrest him? The truth is: if God absolves, conscience, if rightly informed, absolves; if once God says, "Thy sins are pardoned," conscience says, "Go in peace." If the sky be clear and no storms blow there, the sea is calm; so if all be clear above and God shines with pardoning mercy upon the soul, conscience is calm and serene.

5. Nothing that befalls a pardoned soul shall hurt him. "There shall no evil befall thee," that is, no destructive evil. Everything to a wicked man is hurtful. Good things are for his hurt. His very blessings are turned into a curse. "I will curse your blessings" (Mal. ii. 2). Riches and prosperity do him hurt. They are not *munera* [favours] but *insidiae* [snares]; "riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt," like Haman's banquet which ushered in his funeral. Ordinances do a sinner hurt; they are a savour of death. Cordials themselves kill. The best things hurt the wicked, but the worst things that befall a pardoned soul shall do him no hurt. The sting, the poison, the curse is gone. His soul is no more hurt than David hurt Saul when he cut off the lap of his garment.

6. To a pardoned soul, everything has a commission to do him good. Afflictions do him good; poverty, reproach, persecution. "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." As the elements, though of contrary qualities, are so tempered that they work for the good of the universe, so the most cross providences work for good to a pardoned soul. Correction as a corrosive eats out sin; it cures the swelling of pride, the fever of lust, and the dropsy of avarice. It is a refining fire to purify grace and make it sparkle as gold. Every cross providence to a pardoned soul is like Paul's Euroclydon (or cross wind) which, though it broke the ship, yet Paul was brought to shore upon the broken pieces.

7. A pardoned soul is not only exempted from wrath but invested with dignity, as Joseph was not only freed from prison but advanced to be second man in the kingdom.

8. A pardoned soul is made a favourite of heaven. A king

may pardon a traitor but will not make him one of his privy council; but whom God pardons, He receives into favour. I may say to him as the angel to the virgin Mary, "Thou hast found favour with God." Hence, such as are forgiven are said to be crowned with lovingkindness. Whom God pardons, He crowns. Whom God absolves, He marries to Himself. "I am merciful and will not keep anger for ever"—there is forgiveness (Jer. iii. 12); and in the fourteenth verse, "I am married to you"; and he who is matched into the crown of heaven is as rich as the angels, as rich as heaven can make him.

9. Sin being pardoned, we may come with humble boldness to God in prayer. Guilt makes us afraid to go to God. Adam having sinned was afraid and hid himself. Guilt clips the wings of prayer, it fills the face with blushing; but forgiveness breeds confidence. We may look upon God as a Father of mercy, holding forth a golden sceptre. He that has got his pardon can look upon his prince with comfort.

10. Forgiveness of sin makes our services acceptable. God takes all we do in good part. A guilty person does nothing that is pleasing to God. His prayer is "turned into sin"; but when sin is pardoned, God accepts his offering. We read of Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord: "Joshua was clothed with filthy garments," that is, he was guilty of divers sins. Now, saith the Lord, "Take away the filthy garments, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee"; and then he stood and ministered before the Lord, and his services were accepted (Zech. iii. 3, 4).

11. Forgiveness of sin is the sauce that sweetens all the comforts of this life. As guilt embitters our comforts and puts wormwood into our cups, so pardon sweetens all and is like sugar to wine. Health and pardon, estate and pardon, relish well. Pardon of sin gives a sanctified title and a delicious taste to every comfort. As Naaman said to Gehazi, "Take two talents," so says God to the pardoned soul, Take two talents; take the venison and take a blessing with it; take the oil in the cruse and take My love with it; "Take two talents." It is observable that Christ joins these two together: "Give us our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses"—as if Christ would teach us there is little comfort in daily bread unless sin be forgiven. Forgiveness perfumes and drops sweetness into every earthly enjoyment.

12. If sin be forgiven, God will never upbraid us with former sins. When the prodigal came home to his father, the father received him into his loving embrace, and never mentioned his former luxury or spending his estate among harlots. So God will not upbraid us with former sins—nay, He will entirely love us; we shall be His jewels, and He will put us in His bosom. To Mary Magdalene, a pardoned penitent, after Christ arose He first

appeared. So far was He from upbraiding her that He brought her the first news of His resurrection.

13. Pardoned sin is a pillar of support in the loss of friends. God hath taken away thy child, thy husband; but He has also taken away thy sins. He has given thee more than He has taken away; He has taken away a flower and given thee a jewel. He has given thee Christ and the Spirit and the earnest of glory. He hath given thee more than He has taken away.

14. Where God pardons sin, He bestows righteousness. With remission of sin goes imputation of righteousness. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." O what comfort may a Christian take in Christ's righteousness which is a better righteousness than that of Adam! Adam's righteousness was mutable; but suppose it had been unchangeable, it was but the righteousness of a man; but that which is imputed is the righteousness of Him who is God. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." O blessed privilege, to be reputed in the sight of God righteous as Christ, having His embroidered robe put upon the soul! This is the comfort of every one that is pardoned, he has a perfect righteousness; and now God says of him, "Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee."

15. A pardoned soul needs not fear death. He may look on death with joy who can look on forgiveness with faith. To a pardoned soul, death has lost his sting. Death to a pardoned sinner is like arresting a man after the debt has been paid; it may arrest, but Christ will show the debt-book crossed in His blood. A pardoned soul may triumph over death: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" He who is pardoned need not fear death. It is not to him a destruction but a deliverance; it is a day of jubilee or release; it releases him from all his sins. Death comes to a pardoned soul as the angel did to Peter when he smote him and beat off his chains and carried him out of prison. It smites his body and the chains of sin fall off. Death gives a pardoned soul a *quietus est* [he is at rest], it frees from all his labours. *Felix transitus a labore ad requiem* [Happy is the passage from toil to rest]. As it will wipe off our tears, so it will wipe off our sweat. It will do a pardoned Christian a good turn; therefore it is made a part of the inventory in 1 Cor. iii. 2—even death is yours. It is like the waggon that was sent for old Jacob, that came rattling with its wheels but it was to carry Jacob to his son Joseph; so the wheels of death's chariot may rattle and make a noise, but they are to carry a believer to Christ. While a believer is here, he is absent from the Lord (2 Cor. v. 6). He lives far from court and cannot see Him whom his soul loves; but death gives him a sight of the King of glory, in whose presence is fulness of joy. To a pardoned soul, death is *transitus ad regnum* [a passage to the kingdom]; it re-

moves him to the place of bliss, where he shall hear the triumphs and anthems of praise sung in the choir of angels. No cause has a pardoned soul to fear death; what needs he fear to have his body buried in the earth who has his sins buried in Christ's wounds? What hurt can death do to him? It is but his ferryman to ferry him over to the land of promise. The day of death to a pardoned soul is his ascension day to heaven, his coronation day, when he shall be crowned with those delights of paradise which are unspeakable and full of glory. These are the rich consolations which belong to a pardoned sinner. Well might David pronounce him blessed: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." In the Hebrew, it is in the plural—*blessednesses*. Here is a plurality of blessings. Forgiveness of sin is like the first link of a chain which draws all the links after it. It draws these fifteen privileges after it, it crowns with grace and glory. Who then would not labour to have his sins forgiven? "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

(This extract is from *The Lord's Prayer*, a work that has been reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust).

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### FOLLOWING CHRIST

Dear Drusilla—I should like to have had a little more time with you and Lizzie yesterday, but could not very well stay as Mother was expecting us home after dinner. I am wondering how you feel this morning about going before the church. Were you surprised when I told you yesterday of my intention? As I have said before, it has long been my desire to testify of the Lord's goodness to my soul, but fear of presumption and hypocrisy has prevented me from saying much about it, for oh, I would not be deceived in this matter for ten thousand worlds! The enemy has often suggested that those sweet seasons I have enjoyed in the public means of grace and in private when none have seen but God, when He has drawn out my soul in prayer and sent sweet answers down, and sometimes He has been pleased to shine upon the Word and how refreshing it has been, like showers upon the mown grass—yet, I say, the enemy has often suggested that it was only fancy, that the great God would never look upon such a poor, weak, guilty sinner as I am. There are times when I have been enabled, through Christ which strengtheneth me, mightily to wield the weapon of all-prayer and Satan has been forced to flee. I know that a holy God could never be approached by such a vile sinner as I feel myself to be unless a Surety had been provided, one that could satisfy all the claims of Law and Divine Justice; and has not our blessed

Redeemer done all this? "'Tis He instead of me is seen, when I approach to God."

Oh then, if we have had some token of His love, can we not trust that He will again appear for us? I do feel I must obey the divine command and be baptized in His Name. Come, let us then move cheerful on, "the ground feels firm and good, and lest we should mistake the way, He lines it out with blood." These words came to me with such power a few days ago: "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." What a precious promise falling from the dear Saviour's own lips!

I told Grandfather we would all like Mr. Bowtell to baptize us, that is, if we are accepted by the church. Oh, will they take us in? I hope they will. Though in the world, I trust we are not of it. It has lost its charms for us. We do earnestly desire a home among the Lord's dear people, and to honour Him who has done so much for us.

"Saviour if of Zion's city,  
I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy Name."

Do, if you can, trust all in His hands and He will carry us safely through.

Do leave your work early on Wednesday and come down to Grandfather's a little while before the service commences. I shall fully expect you.

With love I remain, yours sincerely,

Fen Drayton, May 16th, 1881.

Mary A. Webster.

(The writer of the above letter was about 18 or 19 years old; the girl to whom it was written only 17. Both were baptized in the River Ouse.)

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## THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

*From Robert Hawker (1753-1827)*

My soul! art thou anxious to know whether thou art a true believer in Jesus? Try it then by this mark which the Holy Ghost hath given by His servant the apostle. Do you believe in Jesus for life and salvation? Yes, truly, if so be He is precious. Look at Him then. Is Jesus precious in His Person, precious in His work, precious in His offices, precious in His relations, precious in His whole character? Do you know Him so as to love Him, to live to Him, to rejoice in Him, and to cast your whole soul upon Him for life and salvation? Do you accept

Him as the Father's gift, the Sent, the Sealed, the Anointed, the Christ of the Father? Is He so precious that there is nothing in Him but what you love, nothing that you would part with? His cross is dear as well as His crown? Afflictions with Jesus sweeter than prosperity without Him?

Pause over these questions. Recollect that there can be nothing out of Jesus that can be truly satisfying. Thy dearest earthly friend, however sweet, hath yet some tinge, some alloy of what is not sweet. But there is no mixture in thy Jesus. All is pure and lovely and transcendently glorious. He is, as one of old described Him: "a sea of sweetness without a single drop of gall." And now, my soul, what sayest thou concerning Jesus? Is He precious to thee under all these and a thousand more distinguishing excellences? Say, if Jesus were to be bought, wouldest thou not sell all that thou hast to buy? Were He to be sold, wouldest thou not rather lose thy life than part with Him? Surely then He must be precious to thee; and as such thou art a believer, for the apostle has commanded us to say that unto them that believe, He is precious. Take comfort then, my soul. He that is precious now will be so for ever. Yes, precious Lord, there is none in heaven or earth I desire beside Thee.

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER

*From a discourse by Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)*

How we should shew forth and remember this death:

I. *Reverently.*

1. With a reverence of the holiness of God. God's hatred of sin is as high as His love to Christ. He hates sin as much as He loves His Son. He would never else have dealt so hardly with His Son for sin, whom He loved so dearly. He lamented over the loss of Jerusalem (Jer. xii. 7-9); but to manifest His detestation of sin, He spared not His Son, had no relentings when He suffered for us.

2. With a reverence of the justice of God. It was more that the Son of God should thus pour out His soul than if the whole world had been hurled into hell. God struck Him till justice had a full revenge, and struck Him with that wrath which would have tumbled us into unquenchable flames. Not the pleas of an infinite mercy, a mercy God delights in, could stop the pleas of an inexorable justice. What earthly father but would count the sufferings of his son as the rending of his own bowels, a destroying a model of himself? But to see an infinite, gracious God rending the soul of a beloved Son, letting His enemies loose against Him,

standing by without any manifest relentings, and adding to that torture His own frowns, even that God who cannot see His people afflicted without yearning bowels and a troubled heart, yet to seem unconcerned at the death of His only Son. Can we remember this without reverential adorations of the dreadful justice of God?

II. *Holily*. We must undertake such religious services with suitable dispositions of heart. Let none with irreverent hands touch those *tremenda mysteria*, which may make the hearts of sinners be broken with terror.

1. With mourning hearts for sin. A broken Christ must not be remembered without a broken heart. A bleeding Christ and a hardened spirit, a sighing Christ and a senseless heart, are unsuitable. Our passover must be eaten with bitter herbs, with sorrow for past transgressions. We should endeavour to be as much affected as if we had heard every piercing groan in the garden, and numbered every drop of that bloody sweat which trickled down upon Him, and been present when the soldiers did so cruelly handle Him and pierce Him. The springs of our sorrow should be opened and gush out, for it was our sin He bore, and our debt He paid. The fixing our thoughts intently on the death of Christ would melt the ice in our souls. We should look upon Him till our hearts be set a-mourning, "as for a first-born."

2. With deep considerations of the cursed nature and demerit of sin. It must needs be bitter, killing, condemning, cursed sin, which brought Christ to such a bitter death. What a dreadful breach hath it made between God and us that nothing but the blood of God can cement and solder? How are we able to answer for one sin, when Christ endured so much for the expiation of the least as well as the greatest? For death was due to the least; had our sin had less guilt, yet since the least had been an offence against an infinite God, Christ could not have had a less suffering than essentially infinite to make an atonement for it. How can we poor potsherds stand under the stroke of an almighty arm when the human nature of Christ, though united to the deity, furnished with an eternal Spirit, attended with a gracious assistance and assurance of a glorious success, startled at it, and hung down His head? Our iniquities met upon Him (Isa. liii. 6) like a mighty torrent that bears down all before it. And who but infiniteness could have stood against such a force? See how sin pressed Him down who upheld the whole fabric of the creation by the word of His power (Heb. i. 3), and could without any pains have bore the weight of millions of worlds. Had not sin deserved so great a punishment, Christ should not have suffered it. A God of infinite compassion would not have laid so great a load of sufferings upon Him had not sin deserved it.

3. With strong resolutions against sin. It is a sad thing to be Christians at a Supper, heathens in our shops and devils in our

closets. To come with a heart resolved to go on in impenitency is to be worse than Judas, who was struck with remorse at the beginning of Christ's sufferings when he saw Him condemned. Shall he have relentings for his treachery when he saw Him ready to suffer, and we cherish intentions to sin at the representations of His sufferings already fully executed? We should then be not the receivers but the murderers of Christ, tread Him under foot, and make the table of the Lord a shambles and bring the guilt of that blood upon our heads, which, if sprinkled upon our consciences, would purify them from the guilt of all other sins. The Jews took the passover standing to shew their intentions to leave Egypt. So must we resolve to leave all correspondence with those enemies which have murdered the Redeemer. The passover must be eaten with unleavened bread. No leaven of sin must be mixed with our services; no leaven of hypocrisy with our lives (I Cor. v. 7, 8). We must eat His flesh and drink His blood that we may live to the praise of His grace; shew it forth in the Supper that we may shew it forth in our lives. The thoughts of Christ's death should be an antidote against the poison of sin.

III. *Believingly.* We should in this act look upon it by faith, as the meritorious cause of our good. If we cannot believe when we see the price laid down for us and the ransom paid, when shall we believe?

1. We should profess our adherence to Him. The shewing forth of His death is solemnly to cleave to Him alone for the pardon of our sins, the justification of our persons, and sanctification of our natures. There was to be in the passover a solemn publishing the nature of that deliverance, the great kindness of God in it, and the ends for which He delivered them. The Israelites that descended from Jacob were "partakers of the altar" by eating of the sacrifice (I Cor. x. 18), i.e. they professed themselves to be of the Jewish religion and worship by eating with them, as they that ate of things sacrificed to idols in the idols' temple did by that action profess themselves the worshippers of that idol, and had fellowship with devils in it.

2. Look up to Christ in His death as a conqueror. It is the *Lord's* death. He was a Lord in His death; He was a King upon the cross as well as a Priest, as He is a Priest in heaven as well as a King. He hath both His priestly garment and royal crown. The cross was His victorious chariot as well as the instrument of His execution. He then nailed our sins to the cross. He then triumphed over the powers of darkness, sin, Satan and hell (Col. ii. 14, 15). He was a conqueror in His death, spoiling the devil of his prey, and snatching the captives out of his hands. His death was His victory; His ascension His triumph. Regard it, shew it forth, not simply as a death but a conquering death.

3. Plead this death with God. This is believingly to shew it

forth. This ordinance upon the earth is a counterpart of what Christ is now pleading and urging to His Father. Our pleas on earth should keep company with Christ's pleas in heaven. It is the best argument to prevail with God, who, though He may deny our prayers, will not deny His Son's blood. It is the best argument to quicken our prayers. Present God with His covenant sealed. God will not deny His own hand and seal. Present Him with this performance of Christ's priestly office, which is the only office He hath confirmed by an oath (Ps. cx. 4). He is a holy God and will not deny His own oath. Plead this death, for such pleas honour His wisdom, glorify His love, own His truth. Plead it and all God's attributes will plead it with you. God Himself will join issue with you for God's attributes are the same with Himself. This time is the fittest time to prevail with God. When is a child most prevalent in his intercession but when he is most exact in his obedience (Philip. ii. 8), and engageth God as a Father to show the choicest tokens of His love. As Christ was most obedient when He suffered it, we are most obedient when we believe it, approve of it, and plead it. When Christ died, He deposited all His merits in the hands of His Father. Go therefore to God for the legacies Christ left at His death.

4. Plead this death against sin and Satan. Shew it against every charge. We are like to meet with many rubs, sharp and weighty accusations too true for us to repel without the vigorous force of this death. Whatsoever accusation Satan can present against you is answered here. Have we sinned? Christ hath suffered for sin. Have we sinned many sins? Christ hath shed much blood, not only a drop. Have we sinned great sins? The death of Christ for sin was the death of the Son of God. Can the sins of men be stronger to condemn than the blood of God is to save? We have deserved hell, but Christ hath suffered it. The wrath of God, which is the spirit and quintessence of hell, lighted upon Him. Christ's death will answer all the subtle charges of the devil, appease the terrors of a raging conscience, silence the curses of the law and quench the flames of hell.

#### IV. *Humbly.*

1. Consider in this representation what we should have suffered. Those strokes laid upon Christ were due to us. On us should those vials of wrath have been poured. We should have been the mark of all the arrows of God's vengeance. The tragedy acted on Christ should have been acted on us. Had that justice which was due to us seized us, we should have been held prisoners for ever. What power could have rescued us from Almightyness? Those terrors were marching against us. Christ then changed states with us, took our sins to answer for them and gave us His righteousness to meet the justice of God withal. He suffered the pains of hell, the wrath of God, and purchased heaven for us,

which He might have kept without emptying Himself, and sent us down to hell. The sufferings were endured by Him, but the right to them was ours. It was "for our transgressions He was wounded, for our iniquities He was bruised, for our peace that He was chastised" (Isa. liii. 5).

2. Consider the deplorable misery wherein we were. How deeply were we sunk into the mire that nothing could pluck us out but the Son of God! How strongly was the stain of sin impressed in our souls that nothing could wash it off but the blood of God. How enthralled to the devil that nothing could give us liberty but the death of Christ. How obnoxious to the wrath of God that not the entreaties of Christ, but the voice of His blood only could procure our redemption from the anger of that God who had infinite compassions as well as infinite justice!

V. *Thankfully*. Such mercies as the death of Christ require high and raised thanksgivings. It is the greatest disingenuity not to pay thankfulness for a free mercy. The Supper is a feast upon a sacrifice, as feasts followed the Jewish sacrifices. Christ was offered to God as a sacrifice and returned to us as a banquet. He was ground by the wrath of God to be bread fit for us to feed on.

1. Blessing God for His love in offering up His Son to death. In this death God set open the flood-gates of mercy and showered down the choicest blessings on the heads of believers. What is creating to redeeming love? In creation, God gave us a being. In redemption, He gives us His Son, not only to live with us, but die for us, and afterwards to live for ever for our happiness.

2. Blessing Christ for His love in dying. Had not He drunk this bitter cup, we had not tasted a drop of mercy. We had never triumphed if Christ had not died. What thankfulness is due to Him because He died for us? How much greater thankfulness is due since He bore our sins, which is more than death? Who can express that dreadful conflict when He did sweat clots of blood? He bore the torments of hell *in pondere*, if not *in specie*; the *tantundem*, if not the *idem* [That is: in *weight*, if not in *kind*; *just as much*, if not the *very same*]. The remembrance of it being commanded by Him witnesseth the solemn pleasure He took in suffering death for us. Unwelcome and forced things would not be delightfully remembered by Him or ordered to be remembered by us, as a mark of favour.

3. The costliness of this redemption by the death of Christ should excite us to show it forth with thankfulness. Our redemption this way cost God more than thousands of millions of worlds would have cost Him. There was no need of shedding any blood to make them; but the best that ever was or can be was shed to restore us. A word would create them; blood must redeem us. It hath cost God more than all the angels in heaven ever cost Him. And should it not be remembered with thankfulness?

4. The gain we have by it should excite us to it. Death was bitter to Him, but comfortable to us. His punishment was our discharge, and He died for us that we might live with Him. What gain we have by His resurrection and ascension is originally from His death. It is "by the blood of the Lamb" that the devil is "overcome" (Rev. xii. 11). By His blood are the promises sealed. By His blood all the treasures of grace, mercy, peace, happiness, riches of glory are gathered together for us.

*Use.* How should the death of Christ run much in our thoughts, and our affections be raised! Such affections we should endeavour to have as we believe those good disciples had that stood by Him and saw Him hanging and bleeding on the cross. And our affections should be of another nature; for it is a question whether they understood the ends of His death, because none of them expected His resurrection. If we can see Christ pierced and not mourn, we may well question whether we have a spirit of grace in us, for such a frame is a proper fruit of this spirit (Zech. xii. 10). We should travel to the Mount of Olives, where Christ prayed and wept; enter into the garden, the place of His agony. See how humbly He went bearing the cross. Take notice of the pains He endured, the mocks and scoffs flung at Him. Conceive, if we can, the dolorous cries of Christ when He had lost the sense and sweetness of His Father's love; and from thence let our affections get warmth. How should we set Christ before our eyes and have the freshest remembrance of His dying love!

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### II. Accepting a New Church Member

*Two details in the case of receiving new members were brought forward for the Editor's advice: Should the candidates, when they have stated their experience, be present while the church decides on their reception? Should the hand be held up to admit a few at once, or one at a time? Mr. Philpot answered:*

We will give a short answer to the questions asked.

1. The candidates should certainly withdraw whilst the church decides on their reception. What free discussion can there be in their presence? And how painful to them and embarrassing to the church must be their hearing all that is said for or against them! In fact, we never heard of such a thing as the candidate being present on such an occasion, or that any church could act so contrary to common sense.

After, however, one candidate is admitted, we see no objection to his being present to hear the experience of those that come forward after him, though, as not yet being a member of the church, he will, of course, have no vote or voice in the proceedings.

2. Most decidedly one candidate should be heard at a time and his case fully decided upon; when that case is settled, then the other comes forward, his experience is heard, and a decision made as to his reception or rejection. There cannot surely be churches of truth in the land so disorderly and so ill-regulated as to allow of the practices to which our correspondent has called our attention. "Let all things be done decently and in order" certainly cannot be their guiding rule.

*A further question was asked concerning a lady "labouring under a chronic disease" who wished to unite in church membership but felt that it was physically impossible for her to be baptized: "Under such circumstances, would it be any infringement upon gospel order (not allowing the same as a precedent) to receive her into church fellowship?" The answer is given:*

This is just the way in which error and evil creep into churches and gradually undermine gospel truth and gospel order. The change from immersion into effusion, i.e. pouring water on the head or face, and then sprinkling, both of which forms virtually deny and overthrow the ordinance of baptism, arose from just such pleas and excuses as the above. It became customary at a very early period in the church to defer baptism from a superstitious idea of its efficacy to wash away sins. The consequence was that it was often put off so late that the dying man could not be immersed. Must he then die without baptism and so without pardon? For the more the baptism was elevated into a saving ordinance, the stronger was the necessity for its administration. The difficulty was thus solved. The learned doctors of the church decided that to pour water on the face was as good as to dip the whole body, so the dying man got pardoned without his life being endangered.

The next step was very easy, for it is in error as in sin; one step leads to another. If it be allowable to pour water out of a basin and still preserve the ordinance, you may next sprinkle a little water out of the basin; for having once changed the scriptural form and got from the river or the baptistry to the basin, it cannot much matter whether you have all the basin or part of it. In this gradual manner, when once a breach was made in the mode appointed by the Lord, and practised by His apostles, error crept in and became established, and then the transition was easy from the baptizing of adult believers to the indiscriminate sprinkling of infants.

God is jealous of His own order. A new cart might seem a more suitable and convenient conveyance for the ark than to carry

it upon men's shoulders. But God did not think so, and therefore showed His displeasure by a solemn judgment-stroke and "made a breach upon them, for that they sought Him not after the due order" (1 Chron. xv. 13). A thing may appear very right to us, and such or such a step may seem allowable under such and such circumstances. The flesh pleads hard for indulgence; the plan to be pursued seems commendable and reasonable, and the scriptural way difficult or impracticable. All this time the veil of unbelief is over the eyes and the glory of God not laid to heart. It was in this way, from consulting the convenience and listening to the pleas of the flesh, that open communion crept into the churches.

Our question speaks of this as a peculiar and solitary case, and not to be made a precedent; but we know how one example almost invariably leads to another, and what a deal of water may escape through a very small breach in a mill-dam. Satan and the flesh have made the water quite a terror to some minds, but a very delicate state of health for many years in our own case has rarely interfered with an abundant daily use of cold water. We believe there are few, very few, cases where baptism by immersion can be dangerous. But if the present be one of these rare cases, the order of God must not be broken for the sake of an individual. If her complaint will not allow her to be baptized, the Lord, who is not a hard task-master but an indulgent Father, will accept the will for the deed; and if she has been baptized by the Holy Ghost and has fed by faith on the flesh and blood of the Son of God, she has already had that of which baptism and the Lord's supper are but the outward visible emblems and mere shadowy representations.

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Though you should believe all the Bible, the whole of divine revelation except this point—Christ set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood—you have no justifying faith. The doctrine of the blood of God, of a crucified Christ, this only is the healing balsam to the bleeding wounds of the sinner that has any sense of sin or fear of wrath.

*Ralph Erskine*

Beware of idleness. Satan sows most of his seed in fallow ground. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt. The bird that sits still is shot. He that wants employment never wants temptation. When a man has nothing to do, Satan will bring grist to the mill and find him work enough.

*Thomas Watson*

A thief will not assault an empty house but where he thinks there is treasure. A pirate will not set upon an empty ship but one that is full of spices and jewels. So the devil assaults most the people of God because he thinks they have a rich treasure of grace in their hearts and he would rob them of it.

*Thomas Watson*

## THE DEAF AND DUMB DISCIPLE

*The Conversion, Experience and Triumphant Death of John Paddy*  
(Continued from page 28)

He continued in the feeling of his first love for about nine months. But "grace, though the smallest, must surely be tried"; and so our brother found it. Clouds and darkness came over his soul. The corruptions of his nature began to break forth, and his evidence of interest in Jesus was hid. Many doubts and fears, and temptations tried him. I remember asking him about this time, "What is the state of your mind?" He took the Bible and shewed me Psalm xl. 12: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." The Lord helped him wonderfully at times; the Holy Spirit applied some precious portions of the Word to his soul, and he was comforted. I well remember his showing me Revelation vii. 16, 17: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." He signed, "The Lord applied those words to me last night when I was in bed, and then I was happy." Yet many sore conflicts with self, sin, and Satan, made him "groan in his tabernacle being burdened." He had great sympathy for the deaf and dumb and would sign, "If it were the will of God, I should like to be made useful to them."

His health appeared so much improved last autumn that the physician hoped the cavity in the lung was dried, and he would continue with us; but early in the present year, the old symptoms of consumption appeared, and he was very unwell. He was evidently sinking in February, and in March I did not believe he would live to see May. He was very anxious for me to spend as much time with him as I could, and I often called to see him; and how have I looked at him with wonder and astonishment at the divine power manifested in him. He would take the Word of God; this precious book was (as he signed) the best of all books to him. He always slept with it under his pillow at night; he would turn over the sacred pages, point out the glorious doctrines of the gospel, shew me the harmony of truth in the salvation of sinners, and would sign to me, "Blessed free grace! It is suited to me in my wretched case. It saves me, and supplies my wants, and will (glory be to God) take me to heaven."

I never met with a person more decidedly separated in heart from dead, formal, fashionable professors of religion. He once

wrote, in reference to this sort of profession, upon a piece of paper, "All this vanity may be compared to a large snow-ball thrown into a copper of boiling water."

I commenced a journal on the 20th March. This will show the dreadful conflict and glorious triumph of our dear friend and much esteemed brother.

*March 20.* Visited J. P.; found him very comfortable in his mind; asked him if he thought he should get better? He signed, "I hope not, I would rather see Jesus."

*March 24.* He was dark and uncomfortable. Signed, "Last night I could not pray; I could not feel; but the Lord knows I am but dust."

*March 27.* He was still under a cloud. Signed, "I cannot believe, nor love." I then signed many suitable texts; but all useless. He signed, "I want the Holy Spirit's power."

*March 31.* He was very gloomy, and full of suspicions about his state. He signed, "How is it I cannot pray?" I told him groans, sighs, and spiritual desires felt, were prayer; quoted some Scriptures to confirm it—but no light. I then referred him to the prayer of the thief and the Saviour's answer. He burst into tears, and was overwhelmed for a long time; light broke in upon his mind and he was much revived. I was with him an hour, signing the truth of the gospel. After I left, he was raised up into a glorious state of mind. He stood up—clapped his hands above his head, and signed many times, "Oh, how I love Jesus! Oh, how I love Jesus!" Weeping aloud for some time, he then fell prostrate on the floor, repeating by signs, more than twenty times, "O precious Christ! precious Christ!!" When he rose from the floor, he signed, "You see what a gracious God I have. He always proves faithful to His people."

*April 3.* Found him satisfied about his interest in Jesus—told me of the gracious visit he had on Saturday night. He signed, "Did you come on purpose to see me, or had you some other business?" Told him my object was to visit him. The Lord had greatly blessed his soul. He saw His gracious hand, and we united in giving Jehovah the praise.

*April 4.* He was very weak, not so happy as on the 3rd. Being my lecture evening, I stayed but a short time, and left him, but his dear sister took him the hymns and text after service; the text, Daniel x. 18: "Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me." As his sister was signing much of the subject, he enjoyed it very much, and signed, "What a mercy to have an experience of divine things, like Daniel and other saints in the Bible! Oh, I love the Word of God more and more. O, blessed Jesus—He is my best Friend."

*April 5.* Appeared very low, wept much, and signed, "I am afraid I shall not be saved at last." He was reminded of the Lord's

immutability. He signed, "I know it, but want more feeling."

*April 9.* Was sent for late at night; found him very ill; he had fainted when I went in. He opened his eyes, saw me sitting by him, and signed, "I am lost," closed his eyes again, and in ten minutes looked at me, and signed, "I am lost." I had time before he closed his eyes the second time to sign to him, "You will never be lost while Jesus lives." In a few minutes, he looked at me again, and the third time signed, "I am lost. I have no interest in God's grace. You are come to see my death, and you will see." He then closed his eyes, and appeared dying for a quarter of an hour; and, Oh! what a solemn, affecting scene—his dear friends weeping around him; and the last few signs he had made—*I am lost—I am lost*—piercing a tender father's heart. Weep not, my dear friends, he will not die in this state; he will give us another glorious testimony of God's free grace and mercy before he dies. He roused up from his fainting fit, and I reminded him of one of the Lord's former visits to his soul. He signed, "Give me the Bible." He found the words, Revelation vii. 15, 16: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," and was comforted. Who among us, that witnessed this dear young friend in this awful conflict, and then with the Word of God in his trembling hands combatting the powers of hell, sin and unbelief, can forget it? Truly this was a night to be remembered.

*April 10.* In the morning, found him in much conflict—told me Satan was troubling him very much; he wanted the Holy Spirit's power, and more faith to trust in the Lord.

*April 10.* In the evening, found him very dark and tempted. He signed, "I am the greatest sinner living. Do professors repent? What are the true signs of being born of God?" I replied, "Professors destitute of the fear of God never hate sin because the Lord hates it as an unholy principle. They never mourn for sin with godly sorrow; nor do they ever pray in the Spirit to have the blood of Christ applied to their conscience to purge them from sin and give them peace. But the children of God do, and these are some of the marks of being born of God." I endeavoured to direct him to Jesus as the poor ruined sinner's All, and signed to him, "God does not say in His Word, 'I expect you polluted sinners will make yourselves comely,' but the Lord said to His beloved people, 'Thou art comely through the comeliness I have put upon thee.'" This text, through the power of God the Spirit, took hold of him and put new life into him. He wept a long time, his doubts and fears all fled, and he had sweet joy and peace in believing, and joined me in signing upon the glorious truths of the great salvation for an hour. A sweet time to us both! How feeble is man, and how

ineffectual are means until the Lord appears! Then life is felt; light springs up, darkness is dispersed, Satan repulsed, and a comfortable view of Jesus by faith brings a sweet calm to the soul.

*April 13.* Found him a little better in health; had been harassed all day lest his friends should think him hypocritical in his affliction. He signed, "My heart trembles, and my conscience condemns me for sins." In reply, I quoted, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things"; and the words of Paul, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." He signed, "Good, good; that is what I wanted. How suitable are the words of God for His afflicted people!" His soul appeared full of comfort, and after some communion upon the best things, he sank back in his chair, and was absorbed in meditation.

(To be concluded)

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## OBITUARY

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**Sydney Frank Paul**, a deacon at Galeed Chapel, Brighton, for 40 years, Editor of the *Friendly Companion* 1951-1964, and of the *Gospel Standard* 1964-1970, died on September 30th, 1971, aged 88 years.

He was brought up by godly parents and taken to Galeed Chapel from infancy, but seems to have had no concern for his soul until 1901, when he was 18 years of age. At that time he wrote to a brother, who in reply reproved him for an inconstant remark in his letter. He writes, "As I read his reproof, there was a conviction in me that something was wrong, and from that time there arose a concern in my soul, which has never really left me to this day." His prayers before that time had been only for temporal things, "but now prayer seemed to spring up from desires and fears felt within."

He now became attentive to the things spoken in the house of God, and, whenever he could do so unobserved, he searched the Scriptures and read the works of good men, with an anxious desire to know the truth. Mr. Popham's pamphlet on *Divine Sovereignty* was made a great help to him at this time, and seemed the means of opening to his understanding for the first time the whole truth concerning the fall of man and the great plan of salvation. He also read the lives of godly men, convinced that they were the people of God, and with a desire to find the same teaching with which they had been favoured. Of this time he writes: "There was not the deep conviction and burden of guilt that many have; and O how often has the thought of this been a grievous trouble, making me to doubt whether there had yet been any right beginning—but it was a sense of being short and lacking the knowledge of salvation, with a desire to be made right with God, and to know His teaching and the fear of His Name."

When he was appointed Examiner at the Patent Office in London, he had to work with two other men, who were tainted with infidelity—also one of them would break out into oaths and curses at the least provocation. This was a heavy trouble to him, especially as he felt he had not the courage to say anything against them. Continuing about this, he says, "I foolishly said before the Lord that I would rather have the heaviest soul trouble which I could bear in secret before Him, than have this trouble which

seemed to bring guilt for not speaking openly against wickedness. Shortly after this, the Lord remarkably removed the outward trouble by giving me quieter colleagues, but at the same time left me to fall into great distress of soul. I had taken a room in Croydon to live alone so as to be able to read my books. But my continual loneliness, together with the remembrance of my past sins, was made a means of bringing me extremely low in mind, so that in looking back I have often thought it would be right to say of that time, 'Then had the proud waters gone over my soul, if it had not been the Lord who was on my side.' In this despondent state, he was helped in reading a sermon by Mr. Covell, and also by hymn 761. On another occasion, when feeling the hopelessness of his case, these lines from hymn 893 were a comfort:

"Still follow with thy feeble cries  
For mercy will prevail."

He appeared to be passing through a trying time spiritually, but was encouraged from time to time—on one occasion by the words in Isaiah liv. 11, together with the whole of the following chapter. Through reading Owen on Sanctification and Augustine's *Confessions*, he was enabled to seek the Lord again with more hope of finding mercy.

At another time, feeling his darkness so much, he prayed, "Lord, show me the way of life, the way of faith." Opening his Bible, his eyes immediately rested on the words in Jeremiah xxi. 8, 9: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence, but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey." These words seemed a direct answer to his prayer and showed that to abide in the "City of Destruction" was death but to go out of the City (the world) and learn one's own painful captivity, this was the way of life.

Writing further, he says, "In 1906, a way was made for me to come home to Brighton every day, so that I was now favoured to sit constantly under the ministry of Mr. Popham, and at the same time found the journeys to afford opportunity for reading and seeking the Lord. The ministry I found often to be searching, and it was a means of showing me that although the Lord would carry on his work where begun, and would display His sovereignty in the time and manner of blessing those who sought after Him, yet there may be much in ourselves to cause Him to withhold the blessing. I found there was much slothfulness and love of ease, and many things pursued in heart in such a way as to be rivals to Him, and that these things were hindrances to obtaining assurance. How I was again and again distressed with the carnality of my affection, and with the conviction that there was so much in me which preferred the pursuit of natural things, and so little, if any, real love to spiritual things. Fears of death and eternal misery seemed to underlie one's seeking after the Lord, rather than real love for the things of God. Many times there was a struggling to prevail to obtain the blessing, but the heart so much hungered (like Lot in Sodom) after some earthly good or happiness. Fears of being left to utter despair were sometimes heavy, and caused many cries to the Lord to be kept waiting on Him.

"Now and then, helps would seem to be obtained to keep me seeking. One Sunday evening before the service, feeling very carnal and hard, I sat down in a despairing way, and said before the Lord: 'It is no use to go to chapel like this; my heart is as cold and hard as a stone.' Immediately those words came into my mind: 'I say unto you, that God is able out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' How timely and encouraging they were, and enabled me to go up eagerly to the house of God, believing that He was able to work a change in me, and to make me a

true child of Abraham! At another time, after crying to the Lord over my sad case, the words came gently into my mind: 'I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears'; also the words in Exodus iii. 8: 'I am come down to deliver.' How suitable this seemed to my case! Did He not cause me to light on this sweet promise in His Word?"

During the years following his marriage in 1912 and the birth of his children, he was made to prove what an idolatrous heart he possessed. One thing after another, although lawful in themselves, were pursued after with unlawful affections, thereby hindering him from following the Lord more fully. He felt the only hope of deliverance from this bondage of the affections was by a revelation of the Saviour in his heart, constraining him by His love to live to Him.

In the summer of 1926, while his son was seriously ill, he felt constrained in prayer to vow before God, that if recovery were granted, he would follow Him in His appointed way. This prayer was answered in a remarkable manner, and in consequence he was enabled to go before the church at Galeed, and was baptized in October of that year. In 1930, a few years before the death of Mr. Popham, he was appointed deacon.

Retiring from the Patent Office in 1943, he devoted much time to literary work on behalf of the denomination and served as a member of the Gospel Standard Committee. In 1970 he resigned from the Editorship of the *Gospel Standard*, and began gradually to fail in health. Always very reticent, he said very little about himself, but it appears that for some months he had been under great temptation, but obtained relief on reading I Corinthians x. 13, especially the words: "God is faithful." Also the words found in Amos v. 9 were a great help and comfort to him. After being able to attend most services until the last two weeks of his life, he failed somewhat rapidly and passed away to be forever with the Lord.

The interment was in the Brighton and Preston Cemetery on the 5th October. R.M.P.

*Note by his pastor, Mr. F. L. Gosden:*

The lamentable but blessed death of our beloved friend, Sydney Frank Paul, is a serious loss to the denomination and especially to the church at Galeed, Brighton.

During the six years as Editor of the *Gospel Standard*, he maintained that spiritual standard which from its inception has imbued its pages with heavenly doctrine and experimental truth. His many volumes of denominational history will have enriched our bookshelves with interesting reading for the young, and spiritually edifying to others. The Committee mourns a gracious colleague whose sound judgment was a support and of great value in resolving difficult matters.

All his natural gifts and qualifications were tempered with the fear and grace of God. He was a man of unusual self control, and was enabled to maintain the tranquility of faith in the midst of deep sorrows and severe conflicts. These gracious qualities made him a pillar in the church at Galeed where he used the office well.

Personally I have lost a loyal and affectionate friend. Although a man of few words, there was an influence even in his silence. He felt things inwardly, things both natural and spiritual. He was never demonstrative, but by dignified sobriety magnified his office. The spirit of such a character is diffusive, and has left behind a gracious savour.

**Joseph Edward Hobden**, beloved husband of Mary Elizabeth Hobden (née Wallis), highly esteemed member of the church at Zoar, The Dicker, for 28 years, and a leading Committee member and Treasurer of the cause at Uckfield, died, rather suddenly, in the arms of Jesus, on June 29th, 1971, aged 81.

Our dear brother was born of gracious parents at Keymer in 1890. He was their youngest son, and it would appear that he was quickened into divine life as a lad, for the powerful conviction that rested upon his spirit would not allow him to join in company with other members of the family in visiting the cinema, and it should be placed on record, to the glory of God, that this same godly fear shone in him all his days, and he was enabled to live most uprightly through a long life down to the Jordan of death. It is clear too, that as a youth, because of his sober concern for eternity, he was compelled to walk a very solitary path, meeting with many a blow from sinner and saint, but all this thorny path the Lord deeply sanctified, bringing the dear lad sweetly into the blessed experience of Mr. Lyte's hymn (971), especially,

"Man may trouble and distress us,  
'Twill but drive us to Thy breast."

For a while our dear friend tended to entertain somewhat of a legal spirit, looking in measure to good works, and not knowing the awful wickedness of his heart, and for a period "wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way, finding no city to dwell in." His gracious widow records that at this time he could find no comfort or settled resting place until nearly 35 years ago, under our ministry at Uckfield, he was drawn to The Dicker, and it was here that the Lord showed him the "filth within." Under the preaching he was stripped and clothed, killed and made alive, wounded and healed, and we shall never forget the intenseness of his spiritual hunger in the thirties, and mercifully maintained to the end of his days, for he had but one glorious objective, namely, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon?" Thus the Lord fed, watered, and blessed his soul, and it was a holy joy to take our dear brother through the water on Lord's day, May 23rd, 1943. After this he was much tempted and sorely tried and feared he had closed the pool by joining, but the dear Lord wonderfully delivered him from this bondage and temptation, when a dear sister was constrained to come before us and was baptized.

After the death of his first wife who was afflicted for many years, after a considerable period, our dear brother met in providence the dear lady whom the Lord had appointed for him. We were favoured to unite them in holy matrimony at Dicker on September 13th, 1945.

About ten years later, dear Joseph suffered a serious heart attack and for days together it seemed impossible for him to survive; his beloved wife tenderly nursed him, and it was whilst passing through these deep waters that he communed with a crucified Saviour and received the sweetest experience of pardon and peace. Indeed his cup ran over with the divine blessing, and being remarkably revived and spared to conduct services at Uckfield and attend his dear home at The Dicker, when able, the savour of this heavenly blessing remained upon his ransomed spirit to the end of his days, and all who were favoured to know him in the Lord will remember with holy gratitude to God the remarkable savour of his prayers, the fervency of his spirit when announcing the hymns, the keenness of his appetite for the precious gospel, the tenderness and devotion of his spirit at the Communion, and his one burning desire to exalt a dear Redeemer; also his great love and concern for the Lord's servants, and his unswerving devotion to his unworthy pastor and the church at Zoar. We do not write this to eulogise the creature, but to exalt our blessed Lord, for Joseph was what he was by the grace of God, and he has now "crowned Him, Lord of all," and received from his Saviour the crown of glory and immortality.

He would often say to his dear wife during the latter period of his

life, when he often suffered much pain, yet with great patience : “ We are now living in the land of Beulah, waiting for the summons to go over the water, and the Lord has told me, ‘Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.’” When in acute suffering near the end he said, “It is nothing compared to what my dear Jesus suffered for me.” One of his favourite hymns was 1156, especially verse 2 :

“ What mighty sum paid all my debt,  
When I a bondman stood,  
And has my soul at freedom set?  
’Tis Jesus’ precious blood.”

Although we deeply mourn the loss of a dear godly friend, yet we rejoice that he has been gathered to glory “as a shock of corn, fully ripe in his season.” The Lord bless the gracious widow, sweetly visit her, sustain, and bear her through. May lambs still in the fold appear to cheer, and rejoice our hearts.

The interment was on July 5th, 1971, in Zoar Chapel cemetery.

“ Jesus lives! Thy terrors now  
Can, O Death, no more appal us :  
Jesus lives! by this we know  
Thou, O Grave, canst not enthrall us.  
Alleluia.”

J.W.T.

**Emery John Wilkins**, member of the church at Station Road, Redhill, for fifty-eight years, died on August 17th, 1971, aged 90. My father was so delicate at birth, it was not thought possible that he would ever be reared, yet, through the goodness of God, he was preserved to a good old age of 90 years, being favoured to live a fairly active life almost to the end.

In his unregeneracy, he could look back on incidents in which he could clearly see the Lord’s merciful intervention in preserving him from danger and evil. Of his youthful days he wrote :

“ Although through the mercy of God I was kept outwardly moral, yet I have to say, ‘In vanity I spent my youth.’ I had been brought up to attend Station Road Chapel, Redhill, and the Sabbath School there, but through very painful circumstances which I do not wish to enter into, nor is it necessary either, I was taken away from both and dared even to enter the place again. However, when the ‘period known to God’ arrived and the Lord dealt mercifully with my soul as hereafter recorded, I was given grace and strength to break through that barrier and return to Station Road Chapel.

“ Through the companionship of a male friend, I was led astray and to my shame have to say, I broke the Sabbath day. I wanted to have my own way and enjoy the pleasures of the world. Just as I thought I was going to do so (I was about 24 years old at the time), the Lord stopped me (whilst cycling into Reigate to work) and arrested me with these words, ‘It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’ I could not go on in my sinful ways and when Sunday came, the strong feeling wrought in me: ‘Come what may, I must go to chapel tonight.’ I found my Gadsby’s hymnbook and went to Shaw’s Corner chapel. Such was the state of my soul under conviction of sin that one evening when on the Reigate Hills, I literally went down on my knees in the midst of a clump of fir trees and cried with the publican, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ This burden went on for some months. I had just a little help from a read ser-

mon on Lamentations iii. 29: 'He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.'

"One Sabbath a young man whom I did not know was preaching at Shaw's Corner Chapel. In the morning he took for his text: 'One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.' In the evening he changed his text and preached from Romans vii. 22-25. It seemed as if the minister knew all that had been going on in my poor soul, describing my exercises and was an interpreter to me. It was a red-letter day to me spiritually, being blessed under both sermons and by them raised up to a hope in the gospel. I felt such a love to the minister that I asked one of the members (Mrs. Toller) who he was and she told me, Mr. John Kemp (Jnr.). How different I felt that evening after the service; instead of being in chains and shackles, as it were, I was able to dance in my spirit!

"Soon after this I was much tried and cast down because of the power of indwelling sin within me. Hearing Mr. Thomas of Rainham, Kent, preach on the subject of the superabounding power of God's grace over sin was made a means of help and instruction to my poor soul.

"Experiencing much opposition in the way, Mr. J. K. Popham was made a help to me one week evening at Shaw's Corner Chapel. He said the devil was a chained foe and could not go further than the Lord permitted. About this time the words were attended with power: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.' I had been very fond of cricket and golf and, working in an office all day, the enemy suggested to me that there was no harm in it—it was good recreation. It was however the worldly element connected with it, and how could I do so and then join in a prayer meeting another evening? It would not mix. So as not to be a snare to me, I got rid of my golf clubs, etc. I had been connected with the Y.M.C.A. and was Secretary of the football team. I had, of course, to give this all up and some of the members thought I had gone mad and got religious mania. I could only wish they might be blessed with it. I had also been in the habit of attending a secular entertainment and in a weak moment foolishly promised a friend I would go with him. At that time I carried my Gadsby's hymnbook in my pocket and such a conflict arose in my breast that it was not right to go to it, that I had to retire from my office work for a few minutes and seek direction of the Lord. I opened my hymnbook on 728 and the following lines broke the snare:

'I'd seek His will in all I do,  
Yet find my own is working too.'

I went back and informed my friend I was not going. I would explain afterwards why.

"Having been brought up to attend Station Road Chapel in my early days (as previously mentioned) and there being a stated ministry there under the pastorate of Mr. E. Picknell, my mind was led to return. I crept into the back seat of the chapel and after the service, Mr. White, one of the deacons, gave me such a handgrip which spoke volumes to me!

"Preaching one evening on the love of God, Mr. Picknell said, 'Perhaps you cannot go so far as to say you love God in Christ, although you desire to do so, but you can say you love His people.' I felt I could come in there and could not suppress my tears. Another sermon of his was blessed to me: 'Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.'

"On September 2nd, 1911, I married Miss Grace Vigar (a grandchild of Joseph Hatton), who also worshipped at Station Road Chapel. The Lord blessed the union and she was made a true helpmeet to me for 52 years—also a help and strength later on in my church life. We both

joined the church at Station Road in 1913, being baptized by Mr. Picknell."

In 1916, father commenced to serve in the 1914-18 Great War. On one occasion he wrote: "The Lord gave me this gracious promise: 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.' The Lord mercifully fulfilled that promise and brought me through but how often did I have to turn the language of it into prayer and plead that He would deliver me from my fears, be with me to help and strengthen."

While in France, father sustained temporary paralysis of his right arm which resulted in him returning to England for a period. In the good providence of God he eventually was transferred to a Red Cross Hospital in Chippenham Town Hall. Having to bear reproach whilst in hospital, he felt a little drawn out in meditation to the dear Lord in His sufferings and could enter into the second verse of Hymn 307:

" Boast not, ye sons of earth  
Nor look with scornful eyes;  
Above your highest mirth,  
Our saddest hours we prize;  
For though our cup seems filled with gall,  
There's something secret sweetens all."

Eventually he was sent back to France and writes of a time when he was very cast down: "I was going down a beautiful lane covered with trees, leading to the cliffs at Dieppe, when spontaneously, the first four verses of Psalm ciii broke so powerfully upon my soul that I could not help calling upon everything around me to bless and praise the Lord. How different I felt in my feelings! I went down this beautiful lane scores of times afterwards but could not get the same feeling back."

He wrote of a later experience: "A corporal (who by his age should have known better) one evening blasphemed the name of Christ. Such was the power which took hold of my spirit that I did not hesitate, and asked those present listen to me. I told them how the Lord stopped me in my mad career and brought me to see that the whole of my salvation rested on what the dear Lord Jesus had done to save my soul and therefore I could not bear to hear His precious name blasphemed. I am glad to say they all remained quiet and did not attempt to argue. I was also glad to find this corporal did not bear me any animosity but, on the contrary, he afterwards consulted me on a certain matter, which gave me reason to feel that what I was led to say had penetrated."

As a family, we passed through a great sorrow in 1962 when my older sister passed away very suddenly in her sleep. On the previous day she had attended chapel, including the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It was noticed how fervently she joined in singing the hymn: "Ashamed of Jesus." Father felt the loss keenly but was enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

In later life, it became necessary for father to enter hospital for an operation. He had always had a great dread of this and put it off as long as he possibly could. In the afternoon before the operation, he read a sermon of Mr. J. K. Popham's on the covenant, from which he derived composure and comfort. This was evident by his greeting when we went to his bedside to wait with him before going down to the operating theatre. His first word was, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee." He was enabled unreservedly to fall into the hands of the Lord whether for time or eternity.

In his earlier days of seeking the Lord, he was greatly encouraged by the promise being applied to his soul, "I have not said to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain." Writing of this in 1964 he said: "But there are some

things I am still waiting and seeking Him for." We knew that these desires were really comprised in the hymn: "When I can read my title clear." Two years later he had a severe illness. He was much exercised concerning his end and during this time, in the night, the following words came powerfully to him: "So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth." (Job v. 16). They were quite unfamiliar to him but the Lord kept them upon his mind until he was able to find them in the Word of God exactly as he had had them.

One could not but feel that this was given to dear father as an earnest of the eternal inheritance which awaited him, and it was evident in his remaining years that that was all he really lived for. Through the loss of his dear wife in 1963, it became necessary for him to relinquish his responsibilities at Redhill, where he had been deacon since 1920. This he was given a willingness to do and he soon felt a union with the Lord's people in the West country during his remaining years.

Dear father reached his 90th birthday on June 4th, 1971. He was favoured with a visit from his pastor and deacon from Redhill, as well as the members of his immediate family. The friends at Studley Chapel marked the occasion by presenting him with a beautiful edition of a Gadsby's hymnbook with his initials inscribed. He was greatly touched by all the kindness shown to him and at the following prayer-meeting, publicly thanked the friends and gave out hymn 567.

Very imperceptibly, father's health had been failing over the months, but in July it became more noticeable. However, he continued to live a reasonably active life until August 6th, when he was able to attend the Anniversary Service at Minety. The subject was: "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture," and much was spoken in connection with the sovereign purposes of God. (The closing hymn 957, seemed like a preparation for what was so soon to follow.)

To a friend afterwards, father expressed the hope that an arrow had "gone home" to some young persons present. He had a great concern for the eternal welfare of the young. It was also a feature with father to try and say something profitable to the minister following a service. One of the Lord's servants wrote: "I don't remember a time when he didn't speak a kind word of encouragement to me after preaching at Little Zoar." Minety Anniversary proved to be his last opportunity thus to speak, when one was sufficiently near to hear him say very feelingly to the minister, "Once in Him, in Him for ever."

The next day, father was taken seriously ill, his helpless condition making it necessary for him to be conveyed to hospital. He lived for ten days and although conscious some of the time until the eighth day, he seemed to have no ability to converse on things natural or spiritual. On the evening of his death, a special service had been arranged at Studley Chapel, where father had attended during his latter days. On being told that his life was fast approaching the end, the words from 2 Timothy iv. 6-8 rested so powerfully upon the spirit of Mr. Wood that he felt compelled to preach from them. Dear father was taken Home just a quarter of an hour after the close of the meeting. One dear friend who was present at the service wrote: "Though I would not be imaginative, yet it almost seemed as though he (the minister) was watching Mr. Wilkins cross the river, even as Bunyan watched Christian and Hopeful. He quoted those lines:

‘ Have done with sin and care and woe,  
And with the Saviour rest.’ ”

Father was laid to rest in Redstone Cemetery in his native Redhill, the service at Station Road Chapel and the committal being lovingly conducted by Mr. R. E. Mercer, his pastor.

L.R.J.

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

MARCH, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## COMPLETE IN HIM

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham,  
on Wednesday evening, February 17th, 1971.*

**Text :** " And ye are complete in Him " (Col. ii. 10).

Although feelingly I hardly know how to speak upon such a word as this, it has been continually speaking to me; as much as to say: although you, like many others, may sink very low sometimes, yet that does not affect the standing of His dear people in a precious Christ. There they are eternally appointed, chosen and loved, although often in their own personal feelings they may be much nearer hell than heaven. Even so there is a blessed gospel, and what I have read tells us what that gospel is in this sense: that all His dear people, irrespective of how low they may sink, are *complete in Him*.

When we look up to the sky and admire the wonders of creation we may say what a miracle it all is. There we see the handiwork of God. But it came to me that there is a greater miracle than the miracle of creation, and that is for a poor, guilty sinner to be complete in Christ. In fact, I might say that when one really feels that he is complete in Christ, then it is a greater miracle to him than all the wonders of creation. There is such a tremendous contrast between the two parties indicated in the text that it seems sometimes as though reconciliation is impossible because in ourselves we are lost, completely lost through the Adam fall. So that in our state by nature we are ruined. We are "as far from God as sheep can run," as we have read in chapter i; such is the heart of man, and of the Lord's people also in their unregenerate state. The apostle, writing to these believing Colossians, says, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works," indicating that is what you were. When we think of what we were, that is if there has been any change in us, it is indeed a humbling reflection. What a mercy if we can feel it is true that the Lord has "remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endureth for ever"!

We must not get away from what the Scripture declares about this people. It is said of the Ephesians that they were dead in trespasses and sins, were walking according to the course of this

world, and were strangers and foreigners; that is true of all in their natural state. What an awful separation sin has made! It has brought death, hardness, blindness, rebellion, guilt, curse; and we must fall under this curse, unless grace intervenes to deliver us. The contrast is so great. Here this blessed One of whom we have read this evening is absolutely free from sin, and you and I are full of sin, as opposite as we could possibly be. He is full of light, we of darkness; He is full of power, we of weakness; He is full of grace, we of sin. But even so, though that is so sadly true, a reconciliation is possible in the case of all those that are appointed "not to wrath but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle could say of these believing Colossians, although he refers to their former state as he did of the Ephesians: "And ye are complete in Him."

I would desire as helped to speak of this in the first instance as relating to what is involved in such a tremendous change in a person. What is involved consists in two things: that is, what has been done *for* him, and what is wrought *within* him. These are the two things. What is it that brings about such a blessed state as this, that His people are complete in Him?

One of the things consists in *the obedience of Christ* in His fulfilling the law under which we stand. There can be no reconciliation apart from substitution. There must be one to stand between the helpless, ruined condition of the sinner and the claims of justice; and this is exactly what the dear Redeemer did when He came to this earth and took our nature upon Him. He did this for a particular purpose, to fulfil the law under which His people stand condemned, and that is an awful condemnation; yet by His perfect obedience He fulfilled it and that obedience was accepted at the hand of justice and demonstrated by His resurrection from the dead. His resurrection evidenced the acceptance of His sacrifice. On this ground it can be said of all for whom He rendered this perfect obedience, that "there is therefore now no condemnation." Many, many times have I looked at that word and felt what a blessed state for a poor sinner to be in, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." You may say: this is too great for me, that is as I feel myself; but we are not to say this or that is too great unless the Scriptures say so. If the Scriptures say it cannot be, we are warranted to conclude that it is an impossible thing; but the Scriptures affirm the very opposite to this, even as we have it in the text that the Lord's dear people *are* complete in Him. He fulfilled the law, and became the end of it, so that all the redeemed are dead to it. This is a foundation for our reconciliation.

Another aspect of this consists in *the price He paid* to ransom His poor, helpless, sinful people from the curse under which they stand. What was the price He paid? It was the price of His

own heart's blood. Being Himself made a curse, He delivered them from the curse under which they lay. What an amazing thought is this! And yet there could never be any reconciliation or coming together apart from full satisfaction rendered to the claims of justice. We cannot render it; we cannot put the crooked straight and the rough places plain. We are just dependents upon the sovereign mercy of a covenant God in Christ. He came down into this world—amazing grace, distinguishing love!—and stood in the place of these poor helpless sinful creatures, these rebels, and paid the price, paid the ransom with His blood.

Then there is a third aspect of this vital doctrine. This blessed reconciliation is effected by *the power of His resurrection*, as we have it recorded that He was "delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." When we have a view by faith of the blood of Christ we can see justification there; "much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." If you think of justification, of a risen Saviour, you see it there:

"Hell is vanquished, heaven appeased,  
God is satisfied and pleased."

If you think of it in relation to His exalted all-prevailing intercession you see it there. There He is enthroned above at the Father's right hand having power to save to the uttermost these poor sinners, helpless, lost and ruined in the fall, and yet loved notwithstanding all.

Here is the ground work of this blessed reconciliation, and that is what the apostle refers to here in chapter i. 20: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself," to remove an impossible barrier as far as we are concerned and bring the two parties together. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." If we feel something of the sting of sin, and get a glimpse of a bleeding, dying Saviour, we shall value the atonement. I am sure we shall. Once in my life in a particular way, I believe I had a view of that atonement that I have never forgotten, and hope I never shall, and when I come to the end of my short life, which cannot be long now, I want to feel the sacred efficacy of this atonement which has been made precious more than once in my soul. Reconciled! He has reconciled us, appeased justice, removed the curse, opened a new and living way, reconciled all things concerning His people—the separation made by sin, the curse that lay upon them, and many other things beside. He has reconciled all things unto Himself, made us nigh by His precious blood. So in the following verse—"and *you*." How is this? "In the body of His flesh through death." We must go to Calvary. There is much drifting away in these days from the

one centre of a poor sinner's hope. It has come to be considered somewhat old-fashioned by some professors, but it matters not to me how old-fashioned it is. *I want an old-fashioned gospel to take me to heaven.* Here then is a reconciliation, here is the ground work, the grand foundation of it all, and all this has been done for us in order that, if we are really His, this can be true: "Ye are complete in Him."

There is also *the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart* of a poor sinner who has an interest in this. What has to be done there? He has to be reconciled experimentally. What does this mean? He must feel something of what he is first of all, the guilt that lies upon him, that great burden of sin. This is the beginning of this blessed reconciliation in the heart. Then it is, as we have it in Psalm li, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," not a hard one, a defiant one, but one that falls at His dear feet feeling that all he can say is, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I hope I have felt a little of this a few times. This brings about a little reconciliation, something more than a softened heart. It is a drawing power in your heart to Christ—drawn by the cords of love and the bands of a man to Christ and to this good Spirit. When He empties a poor sinner from vessel to vessel, it is not that he shall despair and sink never to rise again; but He empties him to make him suitable for a full Saviour. They come together very blessedly; they are the only characters that come together—an empty sinner and a full Saviour. They are beautifully suited each to the other in that though nothing in myself I am, I find all in Him. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

"Ye are complete in Him." and then this good Spirit brings *the suitability of Christ* to us in all things, and the power of Christ, and moves us in our heart that we may know something for ourselves. Here is the prayer of the destitute, that prayer the Lord will not despise; and what a mercy it is that He does not despise the prayer of a poor destitute one! I have felt thankful for this.

Not only so, this good Spirit also brings *the atonement* to the conscience with a taste of forgiveness. What a blessed reconciliation that brings! If you feel a taste of pardoning love, you are not far from heaven in your soul's feelings. No! How precious He becomes then! Precious! I remember years ago before ever I preached, though I had it upon my mind, that word came so sweetly to me, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." He is not precious to the world, He is not precious to anyone else but to those who believe in Him. What about those who believe in Him? They are complete in Him. To them He is so precious, invaluable. We have no hope of heaven apart from Him, but we have no ground for despair in the gospel.

“ Saints, raise your expectations high;  
 Hope all that heaven has good ;  
 The blood of Christ has brought you nigh—  
 Invaluable blood!”

“ Complete in Him.”

Then again there is also that consciousness that we stand *clothed in His righteousness*. I know this may be very rare, but it is very blessed. The hymn writer says something like this,

“ And, lest the shadow of a spot  
 Should on my soul be found,  
 He took the robe the Saviour wrought,  
 And cast it all around,”

and this to cover you from head to foot, a perfect, seamless robe. He does not cast it round about somewhere near to you, but all over you so that sins of every name and size are completely hidden from view. “Ye are complete in Him.” The connection with this in one’s experience is in this flowing together of the graces of the Spirit, of repentance, faith, hope, love. They flow together when you get a sight of Him. “Why was I made to hear Thy voice?” They flow together; they seem to link each one with the other, confession of sin, faith, hope, love. Here then is the work of this good Spirit. What a blessed work it is! It is linked with that perfect work of the dear Redeemer on behalf of His people. “And ye are complete in Him”—not in ourselves, not in any accomplishments of our own—in Him; and I am sure you would say, I know I cannot be complete in any other person but in Him.

What does this completeness consist in then? First of all it consists in a *union, a covenant union*. His people are complete in this union. We may sink very low sometimes, but I am sure it is well with them that fear God, for they are in a covenant union. That is not saying too much because the Lord Himself says so in John xvii, “I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Who is that One? Himself. Here is a blessed union that nothing can sever, although we may sink very low, question everything and find it hard to believe anything, yet here is the truth. Here is a union that death and hell can never break.

“ Hail, sacred union, firm and strong!  
 How great the grace! how sweet the song!  
 That worms of earth should ever be  
 One with incarnate Deity!”

They are one *with Him* and they are complete *in Him*.

They are complete *in His fulness*. We knew a choice character at Brighton in our earlier days who was so very much favoured by that Scripture in the Corinthians, “All things are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” I am sure she was complete in Him. There is a fulness—“Of this fulness have we re-

ceived and grace for grace," and here it is that in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This is a fulness of grace, of power, of salvation. He is able to save them to the uttermost. They are complete *in His fulness*. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We shall never exhaust that fulness; it is exhaustless, and His people are complete in that fulness, although they may feel very poor and needy in themselves. Yet here is the standing; they are complete in this fulness, and sometimes it is very sweet to feel it. This is a blessed reconciliation, is it not? And what does it enable you to do? To fall into His hands. There is no quarrel then. You do not say your salvation ought to be on some other basis or by some other means. If that good Spirit were to come to you and say, "Ye are complete in Him," what a blessed effect it would have! What love, what contrition, what repentance, would flow toward Him; a poor sinful wretch like me complete in Him!

Not only so, these poor people as I have already mentioned are complete *in His atonement*. "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." If you want completeness you must go to Calvary and to a risen Saviour, who is now at the throne of God, a living Saviour who is exalted there to give repentance to Israel. *Complete in Him*. I believe I had a moment or two once in my life when I did not feel there was anything between the Lord and my soul. Every barrier seemed taken away just then and I remember it so well. I know it was not fancied imagination. I believed there was nothing between us. It was a blessed moment. Here it is then: "Ye are complete in Him," complete in the efficacy and merit of His love, complete in His perfect righteousness, washed and clothed. That is how those are described who came out of great tribulation with their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, all complete in Him. Every poor sinner, though he may often be in much fear and trembling, if he is a vessel of mercy, when he comes to the end leaves this poor world to go to heaven, "complete in Him." O what a prospect this is!

His people stand complete *in His love*. In the Song this love is compared to a banner that is spread over His people. The church says, "He brought me to His banqueting house and His banner over me was love." She must have felt complete in that love then. If the love of Christ is shed abroad in your heart, you will feel complete in it; I am sure you will. You can then say:

"On such love my soul still ponder,  
Love so great, so rich, so free;  
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,  
Why, O Lord, such love to me?"

You will feel it, and some of you have done. They are choice

moments. I keep thinking about that hymn we had the other day,

“Happy moments, when King Jesus is in sight.”

So they are when He is in the view of faith in a sweet and particular way. His people are complete in His love.

They are complete *in His will* too. If His love is shed abroad in your heart, that will make you complete in His will. What does the Lord say about that? In John xvii He says, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.” These people are complete there. This is the will of Christ, that His people shall be with Him one day to behold that glory; they are complete in His will.

They are complete *in His providence*. I know often it may not appear to be so because of cross providences, but the Lord can bring you to feel willing to be passive in His hands under afflictive providences, and that you are complete in Him; that it is His providence guiding you through this path of tribulation; and that one day all your providences will be left behind for ever, and your ransomed soul will escape to the realms of bliss to behold His glory without what the Scotsman called “the weary veil of the flesh between.” “For here we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.”

Here I must leave it. I believe this truth; I have no doubt but that all His dear people are *complete in Him*, and I want that good Spirit to come again and bear His blessed witness in my heart that such a miracle of salvation is true even of unworthy me.

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### THE ARREST

*From “The Suffering Saviour”, by F. W. Krummacher  
(1796-1868)*

But see what occurs? Before the multitude that came against Him has reached the place, He proceeds several paces toward them with a firm step. In opposition to the conduct of our progenitor in paradise, who, on the inquiry, “Adam, where art thou?” sought concealment, our Lord approaches the armed band and asks them the simple question. “Whom seek ye?” The world was to learn that the Lord was led to the slaughter, not by mistake, but intentionally, because He was the Just and Holy One of Israel; and it was for this reason also, that the Saviour asked, “Whom seek ye?”

The answer of the armed band was clear and decisive. “Jesus of Nazareth,” say they. After thus making known their object, the Lord, with the sublime composure of the divine Mediator, who not only knew all that should befall Him, but was also clearly

conscious of the cause, results, and final consequences of it all, said to them, "I am!" Great and significant expression! It was never uttered by the Saviour without being accompanied with the most powerful effects (Jno. viii. 58, 59). What occurs on His making use of the words on the present occasion? On hearing them the whole band of officials start, give way, stagger backward, and fall to the ground as if struck by an invisible flash of lightning, or blown upon by the breath of Omnipotence.

That which thus powerfully affected them was, undeniably, the deep impression of the Deity of Jesus, by which they were for a time overpowered. His majestic though simple declaration called forth in them in its full strength the conviction of His superhuman glory. But this mental emotion would not alone have sufficed to stretch the whole troop bodily in the dust if an act of divine omnipotence had not accompanied it. The Lord overthrew them in order, in the most forcible manner, to force upon them the conviction of His divine superiority, as well as to leave the world an actual proof that it was not through compulsion or weakness that He became a sacrifice for it, but in consequence of His free determination.

The murderous band lie at His feet, prostrated by a single expression from His lips. What would have hindered Him from walking triumphantly over them; and, after fixing them to the ground, departing uninjured and uninterrupted? But He only aims at displaying His supremacy and independence, and after attaining this object, He permits them to rise again from the ground. Their prostration in the dust before Him points out to unbelievers the situation in which they will one day be found. The homage which they refused to Jesus here below, He will in due time compel them to render Him. The knee that would not bow to Him in voluntary affection will at length be constrained to do so by the horrors of despair.

After the armed band, by the Lord's permission, had again raised themselves up, He repeats the question to them, "Whom seek ye?" As though one, who had been mistaken for a vagrant and arrested as such, should suddenly display to the view of his captors the royal star on his breast, and should calmly say to them, "Whom did ye think to catch?" So here, likewise, with our Lord's question, "Whom seek ye?" only that here is more than an earthly king.

"Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He. If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way." How sweet and full of promise are these sounds! O how well the Lord was able to preserve the most perfect self-possession in every situation, however terrible; and, with His anxiety for the completion of the work of redemption, to mingle the minute and inconsiderable with the stupendous and sublime. While girding Himself for His mysterious

passage to the cross. He does not forget in His adorable faithfulness to rescue His disciples from the approaching storm. "If ye seek Me," says He, "let these go their way." The evangelist adds, "that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which thou gavest Me have I lost none."

The simple expression, "Let these go," uttered with emphasis, was all that was needed for the safety of His disciples. It was not a request, but a royal command. But do not let us overlook the rich consolation for believers in every age, which this act of our Lord's includes. For He has uttered the words, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way," to other bands than those at Gethsemane on our behalf. In their more profound and general sense, He spake them also to hell, earth and the devil, for it was He whom they really sought, laid hold of, and brought low. But as regards His believing people, they have forever exhausted their power upon Him, and have left in Him their sting. And as far as these hostile powers seek in the present day anything more than to sift or try the followers of Jesus, an insuperable barrier is placed before them by these words. They can never destroy those who are in Christ. *In the words above mentioned, we have a passport which insures us a safe escort across the frontier into the heavenly Jerusalem.* Let us therefore honour this document, for the seal of God rests upon it.

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### THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

*From J. C. Philpot's "Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of the Blessed Redeemer"*

Truly was He "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." What heart can conceive, what tongue express what His holy soul endured when "the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all"? In the garden of Gethsemane, what a load of guilt, what a weight of sin, what an intolerable burden of the wrath of God did that sacred humanity endure, until the pressure of sorrow and woe forced the drops of blood to fall as sweat from His brow! The human nature in its weakness recoiled, as it were, from the cup of anguish put into His hand. His body could scarce bear the load that pressed Him down; His soul, under the waves and billows of God's wrath, sank in deep mire where there was no standing, and came into deep waters where the floods overflowed Him (Psa. lxi. 1, 2). And how could it be otherwise when that sacred humanity was enduring all the wrath of God, suffering the very pangs of hell, and wading in all the depths of guilt and terror? When the blessed Lord was made sin (or a sin-offering) for us, He endured in His holy soul all the pangs of distress, horror, alarm,

misery, and guilt that the elect would have felt in hell for ever; and not only as any one of them would have felt, but as the collective whole would have experienced under the outpouring of the everlasting wrath of God. The anguish, the distress, the darkness, the condemnation, the shame, the guilt, the unutterable horror, that any or all of His quickened family have ever experienced under a sense of God's wrath, the curse of the law, and the terrors of hell, are only faint, feeble reflections of what the Lord felt in the garden and on the cross; for there were attendant circumstances in His case which are not, and indeed cannot be in theirs, and which made the distress and agony of His holy soul, both in nature and degree, such as none but He could feel or know.

He as the eternal Son of God, who had lain in His bosom before all worlds, had known all the blessedness and happiness of the love and favour of the Father, His own Father, shining upon Him, for He was "by Him as one brought up with Him, and was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (Prov. viii. 30). When, then, instead of love He felt His displeasure, instead of the beams of His favour He experienced the frowns and terrors of His wrath, instead of the light of His countenance He tasted the gloom and darkness of desertion—what heart can conceive, what tongue express the bitter anguish which must have wrung the soul of our suffering Surety under this agonising experience? Those who deny the eternal Sonship of Jesus rob Him of His grace as well as His glory by diminishing His sufferings, and thus really strip away the greatness, and consequently much of the merit of His sacrifice. It was because He was God's own true and proper Son He so deeply, so keenly felt His wrathful displeasure. A Son by office, by mere name—without any filial relationship but a bare title which might have been any other—could not feel toward His adopted Father what the true, the proper, the only-begotten Son of God felt to His heavenly Father. One error always lets in another, and thus we see that the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ lowers and disparages the greatness, and consequently the merit of the atonement.

A few drops of the wrath of God let down into the conscience of a child of God have made many a living soul cry out, "While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted; Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors have cut me off" (Psa. lxxxviii. 15, 16). But what is all that Job, Heman, Jeremiah, or Jonah experienced compared with the floods of anguish and terror which all but overwhelmed the soul of our blessed Lord? We therefore read of Him in the garden, when the first pangs of His agony come on, that He "began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy"; and this made Him say to His three disciples who were to be eyewitness of His sufferings, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." So great was that load that His human nature

must have sunk beneath the weight—His body and soul been rent asunder—but for four sustaining props: the power of His Deity, for though that purposely did not display its strength, it remained in firm union with His sacred humanity; the help and support of the Holy Ghost sustaining His human nature under the load laid upon it; the joy set before Him, which enabled Him in the prospect to endure the cross, despising the shame (Heb. xii. 2); and, the strengthening of the ministering angel sent from heaven. Thus supported and sustained, our gracious Redeemer sank not in the deep waters, but as our great High Priest “offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared”—not as some have foolishly thought and said, fearing the miscarrying of His undertaking, or that He should sink into hell, but because He feared His heavenly Father with the reverence of a Son, for filial fear, with every other grace, was in the heart of Jesus as His treasure (Isa xi. 2, 3).

Let us ever bear in mind that the sufferings of the holy soul of Jesus were as real, that is, as really felt as the sufferings of His sacred body, and a thousand times more intense and intolerable. Though beyond description painful and agonizing, yet the sufferings of the body were light indeed compared with the sufferings of the soul. Surely never was there such a pang since the foundations of the earth were laid as that which rent and tore the soul of the Redeemer when the last drop of agony was poured into the already overflowing cup, and He cried out. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” Nature herself sympathised with His sorrow and was moved at His cry, for the earth shook, the sun withdrew his light, and the graves yielded up their dead.

Yet thus was redemption’s work accomplished, sin atoned for and blotted out, the wrath of God appeased, everlasting righteousness brought in, and the church for ever reconciled and saved. When then the Lord had been fully baptized with His baptism of suffering and blood, when He had drunk the cup of sorrow and anguish to its last dregs, and had rendered all the obedience that the law demanded and the will of God required, He cried out with a loud voice that heaven and earth might hear, “It is finished!” and then, and not till then, He meekly bowed His head, laid down His life as the last act of His voluntary, suffering obedience, and gave up the ghost.

As we are still at the cross of our suffering Lord, we cannot leave that sacred spot without dwelling for a moment on a point most intimately connected with it—the work accomplished by the sufferings, blood-shedding, obedience, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the benefits and blessings which spring out of it. *It was a finished work.* Here is all our salvation and here is all our

hope. When were such words ever uttered on this earth as those which His gracious lips spoke from the cross, "It is finished"? Well may we cry, in the language of our sweet Christian psalmist:

"Holy Ghost, repeat the word,  
There's salvation in it."

Standing then at the cross of our adorable Lord, and hearing these gracious words from Him who cannot lie, if blessed with living faith, we may see the law thoroughly fulfilled, its curse fully endured, its penalties wholly removed, sin eternally put away, the justice of God amply satisfied, all His perfections gloriously harmonized, His holy will perfectly obeyed, reconciliation completely effected, redemption graciously accomplished, and the church everlastingly saved. Here we see sin in its blackest colours, and holiness in its fairest beauties. Here we see the love of God in its tenderest form, and the anger of God in its deepest expression. Here we see the sacred humanity of the blessed Redeemer lifted up, as it were, between heaven and earth, to show to angels and to men the spectacle of redeeming love, and to declare at one and the same moment, and by one and the same act of the suffering obedience and bleeding sacrifice of the Son of God, the eternal and unalterable displeasure of the Almighty against sin, and the rigid demands of His inflexible justice, and yet the tender compassion and boundless love of His heart to the election of grace. Here, and here alone, are obtained pardon and peace; here, and here alone, penitential grief and godly sorrow flow from heart and eyes; here, and here alone, is sin subdued and mortified, holiness communicated, death vanquished, Satan put to flight, and happiness and heaven begun in the soul.

O what heavenly blessings, what present grace as well as what future glory, flow through the sacred humanity of the Son of God! What a holy meeting-place for repenting sinners and a sin-pardoning God! What a healing-place for guilty, yet repenting and returning backsliders? What a door of hope in the valley of Achor for the self-condemned and self-aborred! What a safe spot for seeking souls! And what a blessed resorting-place for the whole family of grace in this vale of grief and sorrow!

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How can He betroth thee to Himself and yet be infinitely just and wise and faithful and merciful in doing so? Because mercy and truth have met together in Christ, the glorious Bridegroom. They struck up a match together, and embraced each other, that there might be nothing to hinder the match between Christ and you.

*Ralph Erskine*

A springlock can shut of itself, but it cannot open without a key. So we can shut ourselves out from God, but we cannot open to Him by repentance till He opens our heart, who has the key of David in His hand.

*Thomas Watson*

## THE SCAPEGOAT

By *Henry Law* (1797-1884)

On the Day of Atonement many victims died. The stream of blood flowed deep. Each holy altar and each holy place received the reconciling sign. The visible display attests that death is the dread curse of sin. Each sacrifice proclaims that substituted sufferings avail. Sounding this truth, they are as heralds that precede the Lord. If such be not their mind, they only puzzle and perplex. But year by year these shadowy rites recurred. Their note was to predict. They were as morning stars of a far brighter sun. Effectual aid was not in their premonitory show. They now have vanished. The cross has dug their grave. Their need is past. Christ, their full truth, has once laid down His life. That *once* is all-sufficient for all the sins of all His happy flock. That *once* fills to the full the cup of satisfaction. That *once* seats all the ransomed on the high rock of everlasting pardon. Who then are blind as they who renew the sacrifice, once and for ever past? A bloodless offering is an awful cheat. It robs the cross of its consummate glory. It feigns to re-act what has been done for ever. Mock repetition nullifies the finished work. Judaic rites are Christ foreshown. Romaic mass is Christ denied.

But in the service of the atoning day, one part stands singularly forth and singularly asks survey. Two goats are brought for a sin-offering. The priest receives them at the tabernacle door. Then lots are cast. Man's mind may not select. Some unseen hand takes one for death, and bids the other live as the scapegoat.

Reader, this scene reveals the council of eternal love. Before the worlds, God's will called Jesus to the saving work. Each portion of the scheme was pre-resolved. Each was consigned to His receiving hands. This truth is precious comfort. They who feel sin need much to win their trust. They will not grasp a straw. Without credentials, Christ seeks their heart in vain. But when the Father ushers in the Son, when His voice seals the chosen Lamb—then pyramids of doubt sink low. He whom God sends is able for God's work. This rock is raised by God. It is enough. It must stand firm. What sinner can ask more?

The sentenced goat then died. Now mark, my soul, the use of its blood. With this the high priest ventures within the mystic veil. The mercy seat receives the drops. The holy tent is also strewn throughout. Seven times the golden altar's horns are touched.

How fearful, yet how comforting this sight! Man cannot move but sin moves with him. Man cannot move where reconciliation cannot come. There is wide remedy for the wide malady. But further mark the gospel of this blood-red scene. Blood is our purchase price. Justice has claims. The law has dues. Our debts are countless. Every moment swells the amount.

How can we buy our souls from wrath? Our best is only sin. But let all creditors bring forth their books. Christ sprinkles every page. The dreadful writing disappears. Let heaven suspend its scales. Sin's load is an exceeding weight. But here is blood divine. Therefore it outweighs.

*Blood is our peace.* Sin seen in its true light, sin felt in its strong power, is misery's misery and anguish more than scorpion's sting. The broken heart is one abode of woe. The wounded conscience writhes and cannot rest. But when the Spirit shows the blood, all dread forebodings cease. It proves that peace is signed in heaven. It waves an olive-branch throughout the soul. It places pardon in the happy hand.

*The blood has a sin-killing power.* Sin is a weed with many roots. They widely spread and ever strive to rise. But touch them with the blood. Let the heart feel that sin slew Christ and nailed the God-man to the accursed tree. How can that now be loved which pierced that brow, those hands, those feet, that side? A holy feeling shudders at the thought. It clasps the Saviour and treads down His foe.

*The blood drives Satan back.* There is no place impervious to his tread. There is no moment free from his approach. No palace and no hut exclude. He has a key for every chamber, every pew. No busy hours are too full for him: no stillness is too still. Nothing can daunt him, but this blood. The messengers of wrath passed not the lintels marked with blood from the paschal lamb. So when this ensign is displayed, temptation starts and flees.

*The blood bars hell.* Those cells cannot admit a Christ-washed soul. If it be possible, let such approach. The chains refuse to touch. The fires curl back abashed. The gnawing worm can find no prey. The jailor drops his keys. My soul, may this blood be yours. It is sure safeguard against hell-pains.

*The blood removes the hindrances to heaven.* Behold the countless multitudes before the throne. All nations, people, kindreds, tongues, swell the vast throng. But every robe is white and every hand uplifts a palm. The question has been put, "Whence came they?" The answer tarried not. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." My soul, is not your one desire to join this company and share their joy? No other cleansing beside this blood can remove the heaven-expelling guilt.

*The blood fills heaven with songs.* The ransomed fall before the Lamb. This is the substance of their mighty song: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." Angels swell the strain, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." My soul, is time fast bearing you to raise this chorus higher? It is so if

this blood is yours. They cannot sing above who have not washed on earth.

But seek again the ritual scene. It changes. The other goat appears. With anxious eye the multitude intently gaze. It is a moment big with results. The high priest comes. His outstretched hands are pressed upon its head. This attitude is token of transmitted guilt. He then tells out the fearful catalogue of Israel's sins. In sign the substitute receives the mass. What a deep feeling would pervade the camp! How many lightened hearts would say, My burden leaves me! The scapegoat takes it and I am relieved.

The laden victim is then led away. It is borne beyond the camp—beyond all sight—beyond the track of man—to the far borders of a desert wild. Released, it disappears in rocks and thickets of an untrod waste. Unseen, unknown, forgotten, it departs from mortal view. It is now buried in oblivion's land.

There is no brighter picture of the full pardon of all sin in Christ. Faith knows this Scapegoat well. Daily it uses this relief. It hides no sin. It cloaks no guilt. It tells out all upon the head of Christ. Thus have I done. Such is my wretched state. But I cast all on One who bears it far away. Christ hastes away with the accursed load, and God's all-searching eye can no more find.

O precious tidings! O heart cheering truth! The Spirit wills that this full comfort should most largely flow, and hence by frequent testimony He confirms the truth. Is the east distant from the west? Can we move through the intervening space? As we advance the horizon still recedes. Infinite separation infinitely separates. Thus far our Scapegoat bears our guilt away (Ps. ciii. 12).

Can we recover what the ocean buries? No line can reach to the unmeasured depths. It has sunk downwards, never to arise. Deep waters hide it, and it must be hid. Such is the grave of sin. Our Scapegoat drowns it in a fathomless abyss. The word is sure. "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. vii. 19).

Can that be seen from which the eye is turned? Are objects visible when the front shuns them? Our Scapegoat hides transgression in the distant rear. Is it not said, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17)?

Who has not seen a mass of blackening clouds? They threaten to wrap all the skies in one vast pall of night. But suddenly the rays of sun dart forth. The darkness melts, the sable mantle becomes thin—and soon, how soon, the gathered mists are gone and one clear robe of lucid blue decks the pure arch of heaven! Thus when Christ shines upon the mountains of our guilt, they vanish and no sight can more behold. It is so. Hear the Spirit's voice, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud thy trans-

gression, and as a cloud thy sins" (Isa. xlv. 22).

The tender Shepherd seeks each straying sheep. He never rests till all be found. But no search finds His people's sins. A land of infinite forgetfulness conceals them. Mark well the word, "In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve" (Jer. 1. 20).

The covenant of grace has precious articles. They are all wonder, wisdom, love. The Father draws them—the blood of Jesus seals—the Spirit is the witness. This code declares, "I will remember their sins no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34). The Scapegoat ordinance confirms the truth. Heaven is holy work remembered, unholy deeds forgotten.

Believer, you need comfort. Drink deeply of this stream of joy. Live pondering this ordinance. Lie down in pastures of delight. Your sins, so many, vile, and hateful, pass to your Scapegoat, and so pass away. God sees you in the glories of His Son, and so sees no defect.

Reader, have your hands touched the Scapegoat's head? If not, your loathsome load remains. Christ, and Christ only can relieve. But Christ neglected is all sin retained. And sin retained is filth and shame. What if death find you so? What! O, learn not the reply in hell!

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### AN ALARMING VIEW OF ENGLAND'S DESOLATIONS

*Part of a sermon preached on the Fast Day, February 21st, 1781,  
by Richard De Courcy, Vicar of St. Alkmond, Shrewsbury.*

1. *The desolating works of God are intended to display the heinous nature of sin.* All the evils which overspread the natural and moral world spring from this source. Sin is the great parent-evil to which, as a bitter and common fountain, may be traced every corruption that has depraved the heart, every malady that has invaded the human frame, and every judgment that has rent the earth. All the disorder of jarring elements, all the commotions in contending nations, all the convulsions that shake the globe, and all the dispensations that sweep away its inhabitants—all imply its existence and publish its malignity. The sin of man is "written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond on the tables of the heart," and stands engraven in capital characters upon his words and actions; while all the dispensations of God, directed to the obliterating of the writing, show how enormous that evil must be.

Come ye who think or speak lightly of sin and see what desolations it has occasioned in the earth. Look at the ruins of

mighty cities, the depopulation of flourishing states, and the fall of great empires, and then say whether it be a small thing to sin against God. View the first sinful pair expelled from their earthly paradise, their sinful progeny swept away with a flood, the earth cursed for the sin of man, and all the generations that are past buried in the promiscuous ruin of the grave, and entertain, if you can, low thoughts of the evil that has produced their dire effects. Or if this complex scene of misery and desolation does not sufficiently display sin's enormity, examine death's quiver, review the envenomed shafts that fill it, count over the formidable names of war, pestilence, earthquake, famine, tempest, fire, with the numerous train of bodily and mental disorders; and then if you ask what has given such strength to the arm of the king of terrors, and such execution to the deadly arrows upon the string of this insatiate archer, an apostle informs you that "the sting of death is SIN, and the strength of sin is the law"; that by one man SIN entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." But should this representation not answer the end of convincing some of you that sin is an abomination of such enormity, give me leave to ask: "Wherefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure?" (Isa. v. 14). What kindled the flames of Tophet? What awakened the wrath of God? Or what exposed His Son to the bitter agonies of the cross? In each dreadful view, sin is the instrumental cause. The sufferings of Jesus, the torments of the damned in hell proclaim its God-provoking nature. Go then, sinner, and after you have in thought traversed the globe and seen its desolations, after you have dropped a tear over the monuments of the dead, and looked with horror into the chambers of the grave, go and visit Calvary. See who hangs there in agonies and shame. What means this affecting scene? Wherefore is the sun darkened and the rocks rent? Why does the immaculate Jesus thus suffer and die while nature feels the shock and sympathises with strong convulsions? Sin is at the bottom of this tragic scene. This was the bitter ingredient in the Redeemer's cup, the dregs of which He drank off in our stead. This was the intolerable burden that He bore. Say then, must not that be a great evil which is the cause of such calamities to man, and such incomprehensible sufferings to the Son of Man?

But do we see this? We are assembled together for the purpose of humbling ourselves before Almighty God on account of "our manifold sins and provocations." Do the feelings of our hearts correspond with the profession of our lips? Do we mean what we say? Is it not to be feared that many content themselves with a repetition of a devotional form adapted to the present occasion without ever entering into the spirit of it? and hereby add to that load of inconsistency and guilt which similar conduct

has been increasing for numbers of years? And does not melancholy matter of fact demonstrate that we are guilty of no breach of truth or charity when we assert that multitudes mock Jehovah to His face by loving and living in the secret practice of those very sins which on this day they condemn with their lips? We profess to regret the continuance of war and to lament the expense of blood and treasure incurred by it. But if our eyes are shut to the real cause of the evil, the visitation may be lengthened out till we are at last forced to read our sin in our punishment. For whatever some may think, war is a grievous scourge of the Almighty, permitted as a chastisement for crying sins and a loud call to the nations of the earth to repent and turn to God. Hear what the Lord saith by the prophets. "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart; therefore destruction upon destruction is cried" (Jer. iv. 18, 20). "Because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel, therefore the anger of the Lord is kindled against His people, and He hath stretched forth His hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" (Isa. v. 25). And in that long list of threatenings, among other denunciations is the following: "If ye will not be reformed by Me by these things but will walk contrary unto Me, then will I also walk contrary to you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins; and I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of My covenant" (Lev. xxvi. 23, 25).

Would to God there were no occasion to apply the following charge to ourselves. "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return" (Jer. v. 3). Whether this Scripture is not fulfilled in this day, let facts declare . . . The conjuncture of our affairs is more and more critical, especially if we consider that an intestine faction still secretly works in the bosom of the state and labours hard to keep alive the expiring flame of discord and rebellion. Add to this that through the last year, the metropolis of the kingdom was just upon the point of destruction, and with it the wealth and power of the nation. These are loud calls, alarming visitations. The rod hath spoken again and again; yet how few hear its voice or fear Him that appointed it! The rich and poor among us go on as usual. Iniquity stalks with brazen front through our streets; and error in ten thousand forms vents its unsoftened blasphemies against God and His Messiah. Places of amusement are crowded; and the whirl of dissipation goes on as if there were nothing to solemnize us or make

us think. Multitudes of our gentry are laughing at the play-house or pursuing a more childish farce at the masquerade, while their poor countrymen are groaning in the field of battle. Youth are educated in ignorance or trained up in fashionable vice, by which they fall an easy prey to the first bold invaders of their morals and their virtue. Dress, visiting, and various species of dissipation leave no time for the serious calls of religion, and a knowledge of the truths of revelation forms in the system of many no part of modern education. Frothy and lascivious novels occupy the place of God's Word, and there is no book so little read and understood as the Book of books. The aged lead the way in folly and vanity and endeavour to initiate their tender offspring as early as possible in those "pomp and vanities of a wicked world" which both promised to renounce. Thus grey hairs give a sanction to evils which youth want a curb in the pursuit of. And thus many a child has to curse its parent for an initiation into the pride of life and the lusts of the flesh, by which his disgrace and ruin have been led on by a sort of necessary gradation. An introduction to the world—that is, to its nonsense, vanity and dissipation—is deemed with many an essential in good breeding. And with many, to "keep good company" is not to associate with those that fear God but with those that are distinguished by no other excellence but the possession of a title or a fortune. These accidental acquisitions are often complimented with the appellation of "good," though all beside should be nothing but a combination of wretchedness and vice. Thus adulation is frequently offered at the shrine of debauchery and pride. And thus men confound the names of good and evil, put darkness for light and light for darkness.

And can it be said that God's desolations have taught us the evil of sin? No. While vice maintains its wonted vigour, pleasure attracts its votaries as usual, and profanity rears its triumphant crest without control or shame, it can never be said that we are advancing in reformation. Rather, as our visitations have increased, the stupefaction of sinners has increased with them. The storms which would rouse have eventually rocked them to rest. Even the deaf adder is quick of hearing when compared with numbers who neglect or refuse to hear that "Charmer" whose voice in His promises is sweeter and more harmonious than all the choristers of heaven, and in His threatenings more tremendous than the roaring of the seas and all the artillery of conflicting elements. Which leads me to observe that,

2. *God's desolations in the earth should impress us with a reverential awe of His majesty and a dread of His wrath, should make us see His hand and acknowledge His interposition in every event.* Leaving therefore the vain philosopher and cavilling sceptic to speculate about the natural causes of earthquakes,

tempests, pestilences, famine, sword, "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth." For thus saith Jehovah: "I form light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. xlv. 7). If the earth be convulsed, Jehovah shakes it. If the sword rages, He "gives it its charge." If the tempest lowers and the heavens are clothed with black, He guides the storm and rides upon the wings of the wind. If the artillery of the skies send out their voice and shoot their arrows, it is He who maketh the thunder and darts the lightning. If Jerusalem is to be buried in ruins, it is because He saith, "This is the city to be visited" (Jer. vi. 6).

Let all the earth stand in awe of Him and all its inhabitants revere His majesty and dread His indignation. "He measured the waters in the hollow of His hand; He meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him, less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. xl. 12, 15, 17). "If He whet His glittering sword and His hand take hold on judgment, He will render vengeance to His enemies, and will reward them that hate Him" (Deut. xxxii. 41). "Fear ye not Me? saith the Lord. Will ye not tremble at My presence?" (Jer. v. 22). "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt and the earth is burned at His presence, yea the world, and all that dwell therein" (Nah. i. 5, 6).

These sublime passages taken from the inspired writings and descriptive of the wisdom, grandeur, majesty, and indignation of God, are written that we might form a due estimate of the littleness and impotence of man when contending with God, and learn from the desolations of the earth to tremble at His presence. But where are the people that have learned this lesson? If a veneration for the institutions of heaven, a delight in the ways of God, a reverent mention of His sacred Name, a conscientious observance of the Sabbath, and a hatred of sin be characteristics of God's peculiar people, I fear the number will be found very small when compared with the bulk of the profane. And here I cannot paint in stronger colours the prevalence of immorality in the present day than by adopting the words of good Bishop Sherlock in his description of the predominant wickedness of his own times. In a sermon delivered at Salisbury, the good bishop says:

"Surely the gospel of Jesus Christ was never treated with

greater malice and contempt by Jews or heathens than it has been in this country. Is not Sunday become a day of diversion to great ones and a day of idleness to little ones? And has not this been followed by a great increase of wickedness?"

And when speaking of the licentiousness of that period which succeeded the Restoration (1660) and opened floodgates of iniquity which have continued through similar channels ever since, he says:

"The sense of religion decayed and the very appearances of it were suspected as a remnant of hypocrisy. And if we may judge by the performances of the stage, which are formed to the taste of the people, there never was a time when lewdness, irreligion, and profaneness were heard with more patience."

No wonder that from a contempt of the gospel and a love of dissipation should spring what the good bishop asserts:

"Blasphemy and horrid imprecations domineer in our streets; and poor wretches are every hour wantonly and wickedly calling for damnation on themselves and others, which may be, it is to be feared, too near them already. Add to this the lewdness and debauchery that prevail and the number of lewd houses that trade in their vices and must be paid for making sin convenient to them, and it will account for villainies of other kinds. For where is the wonder that persons so abandoned should be ready to commit all forms of outrage and violence. A city without religion can never be a safe place to dwell in."

Thus like a faithful watchman he lifted up his voice like a trumpet and dared to speak out. And should not the ministers of the present day copy the example? The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? O ye ambassadors of Christ, "cry aloud and spare not" that sinners may take alarm and fly from impending judgments and imminent destruction to that way of salvation revealed in the gospel. And this suggestion points to another improvement [used in the old sense—*profitable use*] to be derived from a view of God's desolating dispensations, namely,

3. *The necessity and importance of an interest in the blessed Jesus as the great antidote against every calamity and the glorious security against sin and its consequences.*

Of all the symptoms of false security which mark the complexion of the present day, there is none more truly alarming than the supine indifference about the truth, and the sovereign contempt of the gospel which prevail amongst us. Our times are distinguished by much free thinking, and I wish there was no cause to add, by much free blaspheming too. Some make liturgies and omit all divine homage to Him whom the Scriptures command us to honour even as we honour the Father. This appears a bright discovery to others, who immediately take the hint and frame a manual on a broader plan, in which the Name of Jesus

Christ is not so much as mentioned. A compliment this to the Deists, who are very much enraged at the idea of making a crucified Man the centre of any system or the object of any divine honours. But a third, still more hugely catholic steps forward, and proposes a more enlarged plan in which Jews, Turks and the worshippers of Jupiter may be blended together in one common brotherhood with believers in Jesus Christ, and a way to happiness be secured for Julian the Apostate as well as Paul the Apostle. This is free-thinking with a witness! But would such persons think as closely and calmly as they think freely, the desolating judgments of God might teach them that the Jewish nation could not practise idolatry without suffering severely for it, and that rejection of the Messiah and contempt of His gospel were the aggravated sins that reduced their city and temple to ashes and themselves to the abject state of vagabonds on the earth.

If there be any one truth that appears more prominent than all the rest in sacred Scripture, it is that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"; that He is our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption"; that "there is none other name under heaven whereby we can be saved"; that "He is set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood"; that He "offered Himself a sacrifice to God and died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"; that not our works but His work is to be the ground of our acceptance, since we are "accepted in the Beloved"; and that to stamp sufficiency on His glorious salvation, "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily." And yet how little do these truths enter into popular systems! Is there any question that would appear more difficult to many professors of Christianity to be solved than "What think ye of Christ?" But while the infidel sports with truth, let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Would we be secure from the guilt of sin, or armed against the sting of death, let us betake ourselves to Him who bore the one and conquered the other by dying Himself. Would we be prepared for whatever afflictions may befall us as individuals or judgments overtake us as a nation, let us build our hope upon the Rock of Ages and then all shall work for good. If Christ be ours, then whether wrath is revealed or judgments impend, we shall have a secure shelter in His blood and righteousness. The earth may be removed and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea, yet in the midst of nature's wreck we shall sing, "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge."

4. *We should view even the desolations of the earth as an accessory ground of joy and confidence in God.* When Martin Luther and his associates in Reformation were in any trouble, he used often to say, "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm." With the words of this sweet composition in his mouth and the energetic

power of it in his heart, he animated himself and his companions in tribulation. When any storms arose within, the subject of this Psalm dispelled them and like the melody of David's harp, soothing to rest the turbulent spirit of Saul, calmed their fears and enabled them to sing their troubles away. We should imitate the heroic spirit of these champions in the cause of truth for we have the same reason to rejoice that they had. If the Lord be our God, we should trust in Him and not be afraid. He never gives up that tender relation towards His people amidst any troubles that may arise. Though He desolate the earth with the most fearful judgments, yet He is the Father of His chosen still. And when this globe shall be in flames, Jesus will collect His jewels and preserve them from ruin. Therefore in the words of Habakkuk: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet let us rejoice in the Lord, let us joy in the God of our salvation" (Hab. iii. 17, 18).

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### III. Re-baptizing

*The question was asked: If a person applies for membership, is it right to baptize him again if he has previously been baptized among the General Baptists? The following answer was given:*

Our own view is this: that if a person has been baptized, we mean of course by immersion, when *in a state of nature*, by the General Baptists, the act is not valid. It was not an act of faith, it did not spring from the grace of God, nor did it meet, being but sin (Rom. xiv. 23), His holy approbation. It was therefore in our judgment as much invalid as infant sprinkling, and stands much upon the same footing; for assume that the infant was immersed as was the custom formerly, we should not accept *that* as baptism for want of faith in the recipient. If then an adult be baptized by immersion when in a state of unbelief, how does that differ from the immersion of a child? The point is not age (for a child of eight or nine years of age or younger might believe and be baptized) but the possession or non-possession of faith in the person baptized.

If then a person came before our church, who in his own judgment had been baptized when dead in a profession, we should certainly think it right, we will not say to re-baptize him because we consider the first baptism wholly null and void, but to baptize him like any other candidate.

But though baptized by the General Baptists, if the person were at the time of his baptism *a partaker of grace and did it as an act of faith*, we should not think it right to baptize him again.

## THE DEAF AND DUMB DISCIPLE

*The Conversion, Experience and Triumphant Death of John Paddy.*

(Continued from page 57)

*Lord's day evening, April 15.* Called on my dear young friend and son in the faith. He was very low in his mind. He had been reading about Bunyan's man in the iron cage; was very fearful he should prove like him. He had also been thinking much of Esau, and feared he should be nothing after all but a reprobate. He signed, "Did Esau repent?" I endeavoured to explain to him Hebrews xii. 16, 17 ("Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"); that God never gave Esau a spiritual blessing, therefore he never possessed one; and that Esau never did in the fear of God desire a spiritual blessing. He shewed great interest in the exposition, and signed, "I understand—I understand; but I often fear I am not honest." After some interesting communion, I left him with much hectic fever and very high pulse.

*April 16.* Found my dear friend reading God's Word and very comfortable in his mind. He shewed me Psalms i and ii, and very much enjoyed Titus ii. 13, 14: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He fixed his finger upon the word "purify," and signed, "Ah, that is what I want." This was a very pleasant visit, and I left my friend satisfied of his interest in Jesus, and his faith fixed upon the Rock of Ages.

*April 18.* My dear friend very low in body and rather low in mind—lamented he had no more love to Jesus. He signed, "I feel all poverty and nothing but sin. I trust Jesus is my blessed Saviour, and I know God is faithful and that His truth is everlasting; but I want more power, more faith and love, and more spiritual feeling."

*April 20.* Found my friend and brother very calm and comfortable—solemn and earnest in divine things. He signed of the bliss and glorified spirits of the just in heaven, and was delighted at the prospect of meeting them. He signed, "But above all to see blessed Jesus. O, how I love Jesus—dear precious Lamb of God!" Had a very spiritual and encouraging season with him for an hour.

*April 23.* Found him very weak in body, but with his faith firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages. Asked him if he was

satisfied of his interest in Jesus? He signed, "Yes—yes!" I again signed, "Have you no doubts and fears about this important matter now?" He replied, "None at all. I can commit all to Jesus. He will take good care of me in life and death, and I will 'Crown Him Lord of all.'"

We wept and rejoiced together at the Lord's manifested power and glory in supporting him and bringing him through the fiery trial, and enabling him to say:

"Satan may vent his sharpest spite,  
And all his legions roar;  
Almighty mercy guards my life,  
And bounds his raging power."

Having business that called me from home, I did not see my afflicted brother until

*April 26.* Then saw he was altered very much, and could not be far from the "last enemy." He was exercised in his mind about an unpleasant dream of the preceding night. He dreamed that his dear sister and father were in heaven, and that he was sinking into hell. This brought on more conflict; Satan told him hell was the place he would go to, and not to heaven. I signed many portions of God's Word to him. The Holy Spirit was pleased to apply some of them, and my dear friend was wonderfully raised up to praise and bless our faithful covenant God and Father. I left him with the impression he would not live forty-eight hours.

*April 27.* Called at eleven in the morning, found my beloved brother in bed; this was the first time I had seen him in bed. As soon as I entered his room, he held up both his thumbs (which means "good—good"). I saw by his countenance he was happy in the Lord, and he was evidently near his end. It rejoiced my heart to see him, and I prayed the dear Lord to give him the triumphs of faith in death. He was too weak to hold the Bible to read; he begged his dear sister to hold it while he read his morning portions. He then signed for the hymn book, and read the hymn:

"Go worship at Immanuel's feet;  
See in His face what wonders meet,  
Earth is too narrow to express  
His worth, His glory, or His grace";

and with much feeling, and a sweet smile, pointed to the 8th and 9th verses: "Is He a Fountain? there I bathe," and "Is He a Fire? He'll purge my dross."

He was anxious to be brought down into the sitting-room and I assisted in bringing my afflicted friend down for the last time. I left him with the assurance I would go early in the evening.

*April 27.* Went in at six in the evening. He held out his hand, and very soon signed, "I am going home." I signed, "Do

you long to go?" He replied, "Yes—yes; I long to see precious—precious Jesus."

I signed, "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." He spread out his arms, and his whole countenance beamed with delight and glory, ready to fly to the precious bosom of his dear exalted Jesus. He evidently enjoyed the fulness of Mr. Kent's anticipation:

"My soul anticipates the day,  
Would stretch her wings and soar away,  
To aid the song, a palm to bear,  
And bow the chief of sinners there."

A little before seven, he was carried up to bed in a dying state, and then commenced such a solemn, interesting, glorious and triumphant scene I never witnessed before. Deaf and dumb as our beloved brother was, and almost past signing, yet he lay with his soul full of glory. I signed, "Is Jesus precious now?" "Yes—yes, He is very—very precious." He fixed his eyes upon his dear sister, who had been his kind, faithful, and affectionate nurse. She signed, "Jesus is all." He made an effort, raised up his hands, and signed, "MY BELOVED." This was the last sentence he was able to sign with his fingers, and he took hold of his father's thumb, with both hands, moving it up and down for about a quarter of an hour, meaning, "Good, good; I am safe, father; I am happy." He then caught sight of me, and took hold of my thumb to assure me he was safe and happy; then in triumph raised his arms, and clapped his hands above his head, while his countenance appeared illuminated with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. After many gestures that we understood to signify the transport of his soul, the dear dying youth in a very solemn manner put out his arm, in the form to mean—"Truth truth," while his look at me and his dear friends was to signify—"Hold it fast; contend for it. Truth will support you as it does me." After lying quiet for some time, his last effort to signify to us the glorious prospect before him was by taking hold of the bed-clothes, making them into a banner, waving it over his head as an emblem of Victory! Victory! Victory! Oh, my dear reader, I must leave you to form some opinion of the feelings of his God-fearing friends, who witnessed this wonderful triumph of free grace.

He took a very affectionate farewell of his dear father about twelve o'clock, and soon after five in the morning of the 28th April, 1849, his ransomed spirit entered heaven to behold his precious Jesus, and to possess the fulness of immortal glory which the Lord had given him the earnest of, when the Holy Spirit applied these words to his soul, "They shall hunger no more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and

shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Our dear brother had a very favourite hymn. It was greatly blessed to him, and he would sign, “It is the best I ever met with, and is one of Mr. Gadsby’s.”

“Free grace is the joy of my heart;  
Its glories with wonder I trace;  
To me it doth freely impart  
Rich blessings, just suiting my case:  
No monster more wretched could be,  
Nor less of God’s favour deserve;  
Yet such is free grace unto me,  
I never, no never, can starve.

Grace takes all my ruin and woe,  
Nor murmurs my burdens to bear:  
And grace in return makes me know  
In Jesus I’m comely and fair;  
In self I’m polluted and vile;  
But grace sweetly speaks unto me,  
It tells me and that with a smile,  
In Jesus I’m perfect and free.

Its blessings, though rich and divine,  
Are all without money and price;  
A soul, though as wretched as mine,  
May venture to hope and rejoice;  
Its highest delight is to give  
True riches to sinners undone;  
Nor can it, nor will it deceive,  
The soul that with Jesus is one.”

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*My sheep, there is election; hear My voice, there is vocation (calling); and I know them, there is justification; and they follow Me, there is sanctification; and I give unto them eternal life, there is glorification.*

*T. Watson.*

The world is continued on account of the church which is in it; otherwise the heaven and earth would be burned up in one moment, because the whole world is not worth one grain of wheat, as it is indeed full of blasphemy and impiety. Unless the church supported the world by word and prayer, all things would be destroyed instantly.

*Luther.*

Whom He chooseth shall be created, called, justified, sanctified, glorified, because His purpose cannot be altered, His promise revoked. Let Manasseh repair the high places, rear altars for Baal; the prodigal run from his father, drink and swill, consume his portion; Saul make havoc of the saints, put them in prison, do many things against Jesus of Nazareth: yet shall they come to themselves, mourn for their sins, and be saved. For they are elected, beloved of Him who is the same for ever.

*Barlow.*

## OBITUARY

**Edgar Phillip Coleman**, pastor of Smithfield Strict and Particular Baptist church, New South Wales, Australia, passed quietly into the presence of his Saviour on 20th August, 1971, aged 77 years. His widow writes :

"My late dear husband was blessed in his boyhood with a godly grandmother. She was a farmer's wife who had lost her husband by death early in life. Left alone with the care of a family, she carried on the farm with many trials for over thirty years. When she was dying, Edgar was sent to visit her and she talked to him of the Lord's dealings with her soul. She told him she would not have one thing altered, and quoted : 'We know that all things work together for good.' This made a deep impression upon him as a boy. He could not understand how she could say such a thing in view of her trials, and he reflected upon all the things that had gone wrong in his young life. When milking the cows, he envied them because they did not have an immortal soul that could be lost. There was a minister, Mr. James King, who took notice of young Edgar; this minister used to preach at Smithfield. Mr. King caused him much thought by quoting, 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.'

"My husband started work as a vehicle body builder, and those early days were filled with troubled thoughts about his state before God and that well known verse of the hymn writer was constantly upon his mind : 'Do I love the Lord or no? Am I His or am I not?' During a journey home from work one evening he asked the Lord to tell him if He loved him. It was his practice to leave his bicycle in a shed near the railway station. That night as he entered the shed, there shone a light (he saw this not physically), and he heard those words spoken to him : 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love : therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' My husband never tired of recounting the Lord's mercies to him.

"In 1916 he enlisted and was trained to be a pilot in the Air Force. He left Australia for England and joined the Royal Navy Air Force in England and was there till hostilities ceased. While there he became very ill with pneumonia, the aftermath of which affected him for the rest of his life. He was sent to 'Pebbles' hospital in Scotland and while there had a very vivid dream in which he saw the sky light up and then saw a beautiful crown, followed by a voice which spoke to him : 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.' This impression entered deeply into his heart and remained till his death-bed and was found to be very true of him in his church and personal life, in walk and doctrine. So, being faithful in that which was least, he manifested the courage of his convictions. He visited and ministered to many aged pilgrims for many years and was blessed in his work amongst them, as also the Lord blessed him in the end of his life. Ps. xli. 1, 2, 3, was fulfilled : 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble,' and the fulfilling of verse 3 was very pronounced : 'The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing; Thou will make all his bed in sickness.'

"He was laid to rest in the Smithfield cemetery where he had worked most of his life, and loved to be there to comfort those who mourned the loss of their loved ones."

[For many years friends will have seen Mr. Coleman's name on the wrapper as agent for ordering the *Gospel Standard* in Australia. We send our sympathy to his widow and the bereaved church at Smithfield.]

*Note by Mr. L. R. Layton, pastor at Ryde, New South Wales:* The first meeting I had with Mr. Coleman was in 1961 and it was impressed upon my mind that to this man, God had given a particular gift of

prayer, evidencing a sympathetic affection for the church and its people. During later years I was able only to see Mr. Coleman on infrequent occasions, either at his home or during one of his periods of treatment in hospital through declining health. His early years were not much spoken of except he recounted that the Lord had separated him from his brothers and sisters in his early working years. At work his sober conduct became the target of amusement to some, where he was called upon to endure teasing and insults for Christ's sake, particularly on the keeping of the Lord's Day.

After his return from the first World War, Mr. Coleman attended Belvoir Street Chapel in Sydney, where the Lord brought him into contact with the doctrine of duty-faith and repentance, and the zeal for evangelizing after the pattern of those beliefs. He explained to me how the Lord withdrew from his soul and the sorrow and pain he endured, not then realising where his troubles were coming from. As his state worsened, he began to plead with God to show him the reason for his blackness, bondage and despair. In due time the Holy Spirit revealed through the writings of William Huntington, with a measure of reproof, that he had forsaken the right way, and was under the sting and wrath of the law. When the lesson was sufficiently taught, the Lord saw fit to raise his head with a powerful application of Jer. vi. 16: "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way." Having been so exercised, our late brother was always mindful to share his views of "the good way," and so I found him to be a blessing.

His warmth for Christ revealed and the possession of an experimental religion was not simply his contention but his merciful experience. On one occasion recounting his former years, he explained with much feeling and emotion the patience and longsuffering of Christ to one who deserved not the least of His mercies. Smithfield Cemetery occupied a great deal of his time in the latter years and those who sorrowed there were often comforted by Mr. Coleman; in this particular way the Lord had given him a gift.

More than one occasion we can record how, when Mr. Coleman was invited to advise on spiritual troubles, his words were clothed in a peculiar sweetness and proved on two occasions to be the Lord's guidance and were of lasting benefit. During a discussion on the *duty* of coming to confess sin, our dear friend explained I John i. 8, 9: that this did not indicate a duty but showed forth a blessed privilege given to the children of God (little knowing as he spoke that the Holy Spirit opened the ear of a listener to the snare of duty-repentance).

A visitor to Mr. Coleman while he was in bed in hospital said he quoted Ps. xxxvi. 6: "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, Thy judgments are a great deep. O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast." A help was given to the visitor who, expecting to bring comfort, went away with an unexpected blessing, marvelling at one so poor in health being able to minister.

The later years of failing health led to a loss of physical activity and memory, yet no impairment could be noted of his love to his Redeemer, who had shown him such forbearance and mercy.

**Luther Joseph Thunder**, life long attender at Rehoboth Chapel, Pell Green, died October 13th, 1969, aged 84. (*Particulars have only just been received.*) Apart from a few months at Hastings under the ministry of Thomas Hull, he lived at Pell Green all his life. He was a grandson of Thomas Kemp, who built Rehoboth Chapel for William Crouch in 1824. For over fifty years, he gave out the hymns at the services.

The death of his eldest daughter at the age of eleven was sanctified to him. Though very ill, she suddenly became radiantly happy and said.

"Mummy, I'm going home." The morning after her death, the lines came sweetly to her father :

" Not plucked, but gathered by the hand of love,  
As tender fruit of fragrant lilies are;  
Transplanted to the paradise above,  
To blossom in eternal glory there." (Kent)

Early in 1968, Mr. Thunder became very ill. To a minister who preached from Ps. cvii. 7, he said that he felt he was in *the* right way. To another minister, he repeated three words: Ready, Waiting, Willing. An operation was avoided but he suffered two strokes. Not long before the end, he quoted :

" Sweet to rejoice in lively hope  
That when my change shall come,  
Angels shall hover round my bed  
And waft my spirit home."

At the last he could not speak for some days, but on October 13th, suddenly opened his eyes, gazed peacefully upward, and passed away.

On October 18th, 1969, Mr. Message took the funeral service in Rehoboth Chapel and Mr. G. T. Jempson the committal at the grave.

From particulars supplied by his daughter.

**Charles Janes**, deacon at Eaton Bray Chapel, died on March 13th, 1971, aged 81.

The following is from his own writings :

"I was born in the year 1889 of praying parents. Mother died when I was about ten years old. One outstanding circumstance impressed me more than anything else with regard to my mother. While sitting next to her in chapel one Sunday, as the minister was preaching heavy tears rolled down her cheeks. I often wonder what she felt. It was not long after this that she died. Her last words were :

'Himself shall be thy helping Friend,  
Thy good Physician and thy Nurse,  
To make thy bed shall condescend,  
And from the affliction take the curse.'

"Although plainly evident that I was born in sin, the Lord mercifully preserved me from open wickedness; therefore spiritual awakening did not appear so pronounced. On one occasion Mr. Bradbury was helpful in speaking from Jno. iii. 8: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth,' etc.; also Jno. iii. 30: 'He must increase, I must decrease.'

"At the age of nineteen I left home and took up duties in my own trade at Brighton and Worthing. There I found difficulties, and it was not until I had received a letter from my Sunday school teacher at home (Mr. Hazzard) that I realized I was really praying. Mr. Hazzard said in his letter that it was good employ to watch the hand of the Lord. This I felt I was doing and the Lord answered prayer, but it did not satisfy in the way that I had expected. A service at Shoreham Chapel at this time suited me well which commenced with: 'A crumb of mercy, Lord, I crave.' At Worthing, Mr. J. Kemp (senior) spoke from Luke xiii. 8: 'Lord, let it alone this year also till I dig it about and dung it.' I felt sure from this time that there would be hope for me, but I felt just as sure I should have to experience the latter part of the text.

"Before my visit to Shoreham Chapel, I had been rebellious and crept out of the way, but it is quite evident that the Lord intended to meet me with the text: 'Thou has ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord might dwell among them.' The minister, Mr. Stevens of Worthing, seemed to look at me, and raised his voice, repeating, 'Yea,

for the rebellious also.' The message went home and I felt it was for me."

Later he writes :

"Now some words that have been applied, 1933-1934. When Mr. David Mead was baptized, I felt deeply concerned as to my state as a sinner before God. Sin and salvation were a reality to me. On one occasion when near Cheddington Station on business, the snow white all around me, some measure of assurance was experienced in these words, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.' After this I had some good times at the prayer meetings, feeling softened down at the goodness of the Lord.

"This season passed by and I began to feel that I wanted more, but all I could say for a year or two was that the ministry was helpful and I looked forward to Sundays. Then the Lord appeared in the night : 'Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine.' Next day I felt they belonged to Jacob, not me. However, I decided to wait and see if the words would remain, when this followed in the night : 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.' I thought of Samuel. The voice spoke three times, and the third time Eli knew it was the Lord. Immediately part of hymn 411 (Gadsby's) came to my mind :

'This covenant, O believer, stands  
Thy rising fears to quell,  
Sealed by thy Surety's bleeding hands,  
In all things ordered well.

'Twas made with Jesus for His bride,  
Before the sinner fell ;  
'Twas signed, and sealed, and ratified,  
In all things ordered well.'

"The foregoing experience has led me up to a point, concerned about baptism. While under this exercise, Mr. Parker (senior) of Hertford gave out the hymn : 'Tarry His leisure then, Wait the appointed hour.' Then some more conflict followed, but I remember Mr. Hazzard saying in the Sunday School, 'If it is of the Lord it will stand : if it is of the flesh it will come to nought.' Tuesday morning I was awakened by a verse from hymn 11: 'Twas Jesus my Friend when He hung on the tree, Who opened the channel of mercy for me.' In the morning I had read privately Psalm lxxxix, 'I will sing of the mercy of the Lord for ever ; with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations.' The same Tuesday evening at the prayer meeting, Mr. Hazzard opened the meeting with hymn 11 and remarked that he was awakened early with it, and then he read Psalm lxxxix. This was a confirmation, and no time was lost in following the Lord Jesus Christ in His ordinances. The baptismal service was taken by Mr. F. L. Rowell, August 11th, 1935."

For many years he felt it a labour of love to teach the children in the Sunday School.

*Note by his widow :*

On January 11th, 1968, my dear husband had a stroke which took the use from his left side and affected his back. He could not turn over in bed without help for nearly three months. During this time he woke several mornings with an application to his soul from the Lord. In between these refreshing seasons Satan would often cast doubt on what he had received and my husband was very tried at times. After he was able to get to chapel again, he would enjoy the services and then it would all go from his mind because of his affliction, and he would feel he ought to be different if he were a child of God. During February, 1970, Lam. iii. 57 was made sweet to him: "Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon Thee: Thou saidst, Fear not"; also hymn 329 ("How firm a foundation").

On March 2nd, he had another severe stroke. He had found his hymn and put a bookmark in it ready for our prayer meeting that evening. The mark was in numbers 115-117. We never knew which of the three it was for he became unconscious and remained like that until he passed away on March 9th, 1971. Our loss is his eternal gain. The funeral was on March 13th, taken by our pastor, Mr. F. G. Peplow. We miss a loving and kind husband and father, and especially his prayers.

**Herbert Russell**, beloved deacon at Mount Zion Chapel, West Kington, entered into eternal rest on September 17th, 1971, aged 89. He was the youngest son of Isaac Russell, a much loved minister of the gospel.

We have no written account of his call by grace, but believe he was brought to a concern regarding eternal things in early days. Our dear friend was baptized in the mill stream at West Kington by Mr. Prewett of Chippenham on May 14th, 1908. He was a faithful and consistent member during the following years. When his father was failing in health, he committed the upkeep of the cause into his hand and the place bore testimony to his loving care and selfless service, which he carried out almost to the end of his days. He was appointed deacon in 1938, and acted with a loving, Christ-like spirit. For many years he had most of the responsibility of the causes at Grittleton, Marshfield and Luckington, as well as West Kington, often taking reading services at these chapels.

He was a man of prayer and ever confessed that he was a sinner saved by grace, and owned his unworthiness of the least of God's mercies. He was able to attend chapel till the end, and in his prayer in the vestry on the last Lord's day evening, he quoted with deep feeling :

“ Heal us, Immanuel, here we are,  
Waiting to feel Thy touch;  
Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair,  
*And, Saviour, we are such.*”

His earthly remains were interred in the graveyard that he had attended so lovingly to await the glorious resurrection morn. “ 'Tis with the righteous well.”

R.B.

**Ellen Parsons** died on December 2nd, 1971, aged 94, at the Bethesda Home, Brighton. During most of her long life she attended Galeed Chapel, Brighton. She was of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of the Lord, is of great price. The truth was in her hidden part (Ps. li. 6). She was deeply thankful for the comfort of the Home, and the loving attention of the Matron. Our prayerful sympathy is extended to her devoted sister who tenderly watched by her bedside unto the end, and who has *not* to sorrow, as those that have no hope.

F.L.G.

**Jabez Haizelden** died in the Lord 29th December, 1971. He was an honourable member of the church at Galeed, Brighton. Another pillar removed. His prayers are ended. “ Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever.”

F.L.G.

**Mary Gertrude Holder** passed peacefully into rest 30th December, 1971. She was for many years a member of the church at Galeed, Brighton. A woman of a meek and quiet spirit, and a true Mother in Israel.

F.L.G.

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

APRIL, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## PROVIDENCE

*Sermon preached at Dartmouth by John Flavel (1628-1691).*

**Text:** "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church" (Eph. i. 22).

The foregoing verses are spent in a thankful and humble adoration of the grace of God in bringing the Ephesians to believe in Christ. The effect of that power that raised their hearts to believe in Christ is here compared with that other glorious effect of it, even the raising of Christ Himself from the dead. Both these owe themselves to the same efficient cause. It raised Christ from a low estate, even from the dead, to a high, a very high and glorious state, to be the Head both of the world and of the church; the Head of the world by way of dominion, the Head of the church by way of union and special influence, ruling the world for the good of His people in it. "He gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church."

In this Scripture let these four things be seriously regarded:

1. *The dignity and authority committed to Christ:* "He hath put all things under His feet"; which implies full, ample and absolute dominion in Him, and subjection in them over whom He reigns. This power is delegated to Him by the Father; for beside the essential, native, ingenerate power and dominion over all, which He hath as God and is common to every Person in the Godhead (Psa. xxii. 28), there is a mediatory dispensed authority, which is proper to Him as Mediator, which He receives as the reward or fruit of His suffering (Phil. ii. 8).

2. *The subject recipient of this authority, which is Christ, and Christ primarily and only.* Whatever authority any creature is clothed with, whether it be political or ecclesiastical, is but ministerial and derivative. Christ is the only Lord (Jude 4), the fountain of all power.

3. *The object of this authority, the whole creation;* all things are put under His feet. He rules from sea to sea, even to the utmost bounds of God's creation. "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh," all creatures, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate; angels, devils, men, winds, seas, all obey Him.

4. And especially take notice of *the end for which He governs*

*and rules the universal empire; it is for the church*—that is, for the advantage, comfort and salvation of that chosen remnant He died for. He purchased the church; and that He might have the highest security that His blood should not be lost, God the Father hath put all things into His hand to order and dispose all as He pleaseth. For the furtherance of that, His design and end, as He bought the persons of some, so the services of all the rest; and that they might effectually serve the end they are designed to, Christ will order them all in a blessed subordination thereunto. Hence the point is:

*DOCTRINE: That all the affairs of the kingdom of providence are ordered and determined by Jesus Christ for the special advantage and everlasting good of His redeemed people.*

“As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him” (Jno. xvii. 2). Hence it comes to pass that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. viii. 28).

That Jesus Christ hath a providential influence upon all the affairs of this world is evident both from Scripture assertions and rational observations made upon the actings of things here below.

The first chapter of Ezekiel contains an admirable scheme or draught of providence. There you see how all the wheels, i.e. the motions and revolutions here on earth, are guided by the spirit that is in them. And in verse 26 it is all run up into the supreme cause. There you find one like the Son of Man, which is Jesus Christ, sitting upon the throne and giving forth orders from thence for the government of all. And if it were not so, how is it that there are such strong combinations and predispositions of persons and things to such ends and issues without any communications or councils or holding of intelligence with one another? As in Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and innumerable more instances have appeared. Certainly, if ten men from several places should all meet at one place and about one business, without any fore-appointment among themselves, it would argue that their motions were overruled by some invisible agent. How is it that such marvellous effects are produced in the world by causes that carry no proportion to them (Amos v. 9; 1 Cor. i. 27)? and as often, the most apt and likely means are rendered wholly ineffectual (Psa. xxxiii. 16)? In a word, if Christ hath no such providential influx, how are His people preserved in all ages in the midst of so many millions of potent and malicious enemies, among whom they live as sheep in the midst of wolves (Luke x. 3)? How is it that the bush burns, and yet is not consumed?

But my business in this discourse is not to prove that there is a providence, which none but atheists deny. I shall choose

rather to show by what acts Jesus Christ administers this kingdom, and in what manner, and what use may be made thereof.

I. He rules and orders the kingdom of providence by supporting, permitting, restraining, limiting, protecting, punishing, and rewarding those over whom He reigns providentially.

1. He *supports* the world and all creatures in it by His power. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "And by Him (that is, by Christ) all things consist." It is a considerable part of Christ's glory to have a whole world of creatures owing their being and hourly conservation to Him. The parts of the world are not coupled and fastened together as the parts of a house, whose beams are pinned and nailed to each other; but rather as several rings of iron that hang together by virtue of a loadstone. This goodly fabric was rased to the foundation when sin entered, and had tumbled into everlasting confusion had not Christ stepped in to shore up the reeling world. For the sake of His redeemed that inhabit it, He doth and will prop it up by His omnipotent power. And when He hath gathered all His elect out of it into the kingdom above, then will He set fire to the four quarters of it, and it shall lie in ashes. Meanwhile, He is given for a covenant of the people to establish the earth (Isa. xlix. 8).

2. He *permits* and suffers the worst of creatures in His dominion to be and act as they do. "The deceived, and the deceiver, are His" (Job xii. 16). Even those that fight against Christ and His people receive both power and permission from Him. Say not that it is unbecoming the most Holy to permit such evils, which He could prevent if He pleased. For as He permits no more than He will overrule to His praise, that very permission of His is holy and just. Christ's working is not confounded with the creature's. Pure sunbeams are not tainted by the noisome vapours of the dunghills on which they shine. His holiness hath no fellowship with their iniquities, nor are their transgressions at all excused by His permissions of them. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect," but, "They have corrupted themselves." This holy permission is but the withholding of those restraints from their lusts, and denying those common assistances which He is no way bound to give them. "He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." And yet should He permit sinful creatures to act out all the wickedness that is in their hearts, there would neither remain peace nor order in the world. And therefore,

3. He powerfully *restrains* creatures by the bridle of providence from the commission of those things to which their hearts are propense enough. "The remainder of wrath Thou wilt restrain," or "gird up," letting forth just as much as shall serve His holy ends, and no more. And truly this is one of the glorious mysteries of providence, which amazes the serious and considerate soul—to see the spirit of a creature fully set to do mischief, power enough,

as one would think, in his hand to do it, and a door of opportunity standing open for it; and yet the effect strangely hindered. The strong propensities of the will are inwardly checked, as in the case of Laban (Gen. xxxi. 24), or a diversion or rub is strangely cast in the way, as in the case of Sennacherib (2 Ki. xix. 7, 8), so that their hands cannot perform their enterprises. Julian had two great designs before him; one was to conquer the Persians, the other to root out the Galileans, as by way of contempt he called the Christians. But he will begin with the Persians first, and then make a sacrifice of all the Christians to his idols. He doth so, and perishes in the first attempt. O the wisdom of providence!

4. Jesus Christ *limits* the creatures in their acting, assigning them their boundaries and lines of liberty, to which they may, but beyond which cannot go. "Fear none of those things thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (Rev. ii. 10). They would have cast them into their graves, but it shall only be into prisons. They would have stretched out their hands against all; no, but only some of them shall be exposed. They would have kept them there perpetually; no, it must be but for ten days. "Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood" (Ezek. xxii. 6). They went as far as they had power to go, not as far as they had will to go. Four hundred and thirty years were determined upon the people of God in Egypt; and then, even in that very night, God brought them forth, for then "the time of promise was come."

5. The Lord Jesus providentially *protects* His people amidst a world of enemies and dangers. It was Christ that appeared unto Moses in the burning bush and preserved it from being consumed. The bush signified the people of God in Egypt; the fire flaming on it, the exquisite sufferings they endured; the safety of the bush amid the flames, the Lord's admirable care and protection of His poor suffering ones. None so tenderly careful as Christ. "As birds flying, so He defends Jerusalem," i.e. as they fly swiftly towards their nests, crying when their young are in danger, so will the Lord preserve His. They are "preserved in Jesus Christ," as Noah and his family were in the ark. Hear how a worthy of our own [Dr. Owen] expresses himself on this point:

"That we are at peace in our houses, at rest in our beds, that we have any quiet in our enjoyments, is from hence alone. Whose person would not be defiled or destroyed? whose habitation would not be ruined? whose blood almost would not be shed, if wicked men had power to perpetrate all their conceived sin? It may be the ruin of some of us hath been conceived a thousand times. We are beholden to this providence of obstructing sin for our lives, our families, our estates, our liberties, and whatsoever is or may be dear to us. For may we not say sometimes with the

psalmist, ' My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears, and their tongue a sharp sword ' ? And how is the deliverance of men contrived from such persons ? ' God breaks their teeth in their mouths, even the great teeth of the young lions ' (Psa. lviii. 6). He keeps this fire from burning—some He cuts off and destroys; some He cuts short in their power; some He deprives of the instruments whereby alone they can work; some He prevents in their desired opportunities, or diverts by other objects for their lust; and oftentimes causeth them to spend them among themselves, one upon another. We may say therefore with the psalmist: ' O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches. ' "

6. He *punishes* the evil doers, and repays by providence into their own laps the mischief they do, or but intend to do, unto them that fear Him. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, both the Julians, and innumerable more, are the lasting monuments of His righteous retribution. It is true, " A sinner may do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged "; but oftentimes God hangs up some eminent sinners in chains as spectacles and warnings to others. Many a heavy blow hath providence given to the enemies of God from which they were never able to recover. Christ rules, and that with a rod of iron, in the midst of His enemies.

7. And lastly, He *rewards* by providence the services done to Him and His people. Out of this treasure of providence God repays oftentimes those that serve Him, and that with a hundred-fold reward now in this life (Matt. xix. 29). This active, vigilant providence hath its eye upon all the wants, straits and troubles of the creatures, but especially upon such as religion brings us unto. What huge volumes of experiences might the people of God write upon this subject! And what a pleasant history it would be to read the strange, constant, wonderful and unexpected actings of providence for them that have left themselves to its care!

II. We shall next enquire how Jesus Christ administers this providential kingdom.

And here I must take notice of the means by which and the manner in which He doth it. The means or instruments He uses in the governing of the providential kingdom (for He is not personally present with us Himself) are either angels or men. The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth by Him for the good of those that shall be heirs of salvation. Luther tells us they have two offices: *superius canere et inferius vigilare* [to sing above, and watch beneath]. These do us many invisible offices of love. They have dear and tender respects and love for the saints. To them, God, as it were, puts forth His children to nurse, and they are tenderly careful of them while they live, and bring them home in their arms to their Father when they die. And as angels, so men

are the servants of providence; yea, bad men as well as good. Cyrus on that account is called God's servant. They fulfil His will while they are prosecuting their own lusts. "The earth shall help the woman" (Rev. xii. 16). But good men delight to serve providence; they and the angels are fellow-servants in one house and to one master. Yea, there is not a creature in heaven, earth or hell but Jesus Christ can providentially use it, and serve His ends and promote His designs by it. But whatever the instrument be that Christ uses, of this we may be certain: that His providential working is holy, judicious, sovereign, profound, irresistible, harmonious, and to the saints peculiar.

1. It is *holy*. Though He permits, limits, orders and overrules many unholy persons and actions, yet He still works like Himself most holily and purely throughout. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." It is easier to separate light from a sunbeam than holiness from the works of God. The best of men cannot escape sin in their most holy actions; they cannot touch, but are defiled. But no sin cleaves to God, whatever He hath to do about it.

2. Christ's providential working is not only most pure and holy but also most *wise and judicious*. "The wheels are full of eyes" (Ezek. i. 18). They are not moved by a blind impetus, but in deep counsel and wisdom. And indeed the wisdom of providence manifests itself principally in the choice of such states for the people of God as shall most effectually promote their eternal happiness. And herein it goes quite beyond our understandings and comprehensions. It makes that medicinal and salutiferous [salutary] which we judge as destructive to our comfort and good, as poison. I remember it is a note of Suarez, speaking of the felicity of the other world: "Then the blessed shall see in God all things and circumstances pertaining to them excellently accommodated and attempered." Then shall they see that the crossing of their desires was the saving of their souls, and that otherwise they had perished. The most wise providence looks beyond us. It eyes the end and suits all things thereto, and not to our fond desires.

3. The providence of Christ is most *supreme and sovereign*. "Whatsoever He pleaseth, that He doth in heaven and in earth, and in all places." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings." The greatest monarchs on earth are but as little bits of clay, as the worms of the earth to Him. "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by Me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."

4. Providence is *profound and inscrutable*. The judgments of Christ are "a great deep, and His footsteps are not known." There are hard texts in the *works* as well as the *words* of Christ. The wisest heads have been at a loss in interpreting some provi-

dences (Jer. xii. 1, 2; Job xxi. 7). The angels had the hands of a man under their wings (Ezek. i. 8); they wrought secretly and mysteriously.

5. Providence is *irresistible* in its designs and motions, for all providences are but fulfillings and accomplishments of God's immutable decrees. "He works all things according to the counsel of His own will." Hence the instruments by which God executed His wrath (Zech. vi. 1) are called "chariots coming from betwixt two mountains of brass," i.e. the firm and immutable decrees of God. When the Jews put Christ to death, they did but do what "the hand and counsel of God had before determined to be done," so that none can oppose or resist providence. "I will work, and who shall let it?"

6. The providences of Christ are *harmonious*. There are secret chains and invisible connections between the works of Christ. We know not how to reconcile promises and providences together, nor yet providences one with another; but certainly they all work together as adjuvant causes, or con-causes standing under and working by the influence of the first cause. He doth not do and undo, destroy by one providence what He built by another. But look, as all seasons of the year, the nipping frosts as well as the halcyon days of summer, do all conspire and conduce to the harvest, so it is in providence.

7. And lastly, the providences of Christ *work in a special and peculiar way for the good of the saints*. His providential kingdom is subordinated to His spiritual kingdom. "He is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." These only have the blessings of providence. Things are so laid and ordered that His people's eternal good shall be promoted and secured by all that Christ doth.

*Inference 1. See then to whom you are beholden for your lives, liberties, comforts, and all that you enjoy in this world.* Is it not Christ that orders all for you? He is indeed in heaven, out of your sight; but though you see Him not, He sees you and takes care of all your concerns. When one told Silentiarius of a plot laid to take away his life, he answered, "If God take no care of me, how do I live? How have I escaped hitherto?" "In all thy ways acknowledge Him." It is He that hath espied out that estate that thou art in as most proper to thee. It is Christ that doeth all for thee that is done. He looks down from heaven upon all that fear Him; He sees when you are in danger from temptation, and casts in a providence, you know not how, to hinder it. He sees when you are sad and orders reviving providences to refresh you. He sees when corruptions prevail and orders humbling providences to purge them. Whatever mercies you have received all along the way you have gone hitherto, they are the orderings of Christ for you. And you should carefully observe how the promises and

providences have kept equal pace with one another, and both gone step by step with you until now.

*Inference 2.* Hath God left the government of the whole world in the hands of Christ and trusted Him over all? *Then do you also leave all your concerns in the hands of Christ too, and know that the infinite wisdom and love which rules the world, manages everything that relates to you.* It is in a good hand and infinitely better than if it were in your own. I remember when Philip Melancthon was under some despondencies of spirit about the estate of God's people in Germany, Luther chides him thus for it; "Let Philip cease to rule the world." It is none of our work to steer the course of providence or direct its motions, but to submit quietly to Him that doth. There is an itch in men, yea, in the best of men, to be disputing with God: "Let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments," saith Jeremiah. Yea, how apt are we to regret at providences as if they had no conducency [tendency] at all to the glory of God or our good, yea, to limit providence to our way and time! Thus the Israelites "tempted God, and limited the Holy One." How often also do we unbelievably distrust providence as though it could never accomplish what we profess to expect and believe! "Our bones are dry, our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." So Gen. xviii. 13, 14; Isa. xl. 17. There are but few Abrahams among believers who against hope believe in hope, giving glory to God. And it is but too common for good men to fret and repine at providence when their wills, lusts and humours are crossed by it. This was the great sin of Jonah.

Brethren, these things ought not to be so. Did you but seriously consider either the design of providence, which is to bring about the gracious designs and purposes of God upon you, which were laid before this world was; or that it is a lifting up of thy wisdom against His, as if thou couldst better order thy affairs if thou hadst but the conduct and management of them; or that you have to do herein with a great and dreadful God in whose hands you are as clay in the potter's hands that He may do what He will with you, and all that is yours, without giving you an account of any of His matters; or whether providence hath cast others, as good by nature as yourselves, tumbled them down from the top of health, wealth, honours and pleasures to the bottom of hell; or lastly, did you but consider how often it hath formerly baffled and befooled yourselves—you would retract with shame your rash, headlong censures of it, and enforce you, by the sight of its births and issues, to confess your folly and ignorance as Asaph did (Psa. lxxiii. 22). I say, if such considerations as these could but have place with you in your troubles and temptations, they would quickly mould your hearts into a better and more quiet frame.

O that you could but resign all to Christ! He is a skilful

workman and can effect what He pleaseth. It is a good rule: "Let God work out all that He intends, but have patience till he hath put the last hand to His work, and then find fault with it if you can." "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord."

*Inference 3.* If Christ be Lord and King over the providential kingdom, and that for the good of His people, *let none that are Christ's henceforth stand in slavish fear of creatures.* It is a good note that Grotius hath upon my text: "It is a marvellous consolation that Christ hath so great an empire and that He governs it for the good of His people as a head consulting the good of the body." Our Head and Husband is Lord-general of all the hosts of heaven and earth; no creature can move hand or tongue without His leave or order. The power they have is given them from above. The serious consideration of this truth will make the feeblest spirit cease trembling and set it singing. "The Lord is King of all the earth; sing ye praises with understanding," that is (as some well paraphrase it), every one that hath understanding of this comfortable truth. Hath He not given you abundant security in many express promises that all shall issue well for you that fear Him? "All things work together for good to them that love God." "I know that it shall be well with them that fear God." And suppose He had not, yet the very understanding of our relation to such a King should in itself be sufficient security. For He is the universal, supreme, absolute, meek, merciful, victorious and immortal King.

He sits in glory at the Father's right hand; and to make His seat the easier, His enemies are a footstool for Him. His love to His people is remarkably tender and fervent; he that touches them "touches the apple of His eye." And it is hardly imaginable that Jesus Christ will sit still and suffer His enemies to thrust out His eyes. Till this be forgotten, the wrath of man is not feared. He that fears a man that shall die forgets the Lord his Maker (Isa. li. 12, 13). He loves you too well to sign any order to your prejudice, and without His order none can touch you.

*Inference 4.* If the government of the world be in the hands of Christ, then *our engaging and entitling of Christ to all our affairs and business is the true way to their success and prosperity.* If all depends upon His pleasure, then sure it is your wisdom to take Him along with you to every action and business; it is no lost time that is spent in prayer, wherein we ask His leave and beg His presence with us. And take it for a clear truth: that which is not prefaced with prayer will be followed with trouble. How easily can Jesus Christ dash all your designs when they are at the very birth and article of execution, and break off in a moment all the purposes of your hearts! It is a proverb among the Papists: "Mass and meat hinder no man." The Turks will pray five times a day how urgent soever their business be. Blush you that enter-

prise your affairs without God. I reckon that business as good as done to which we have got Christ's leave, and engaged His presence to accompany us.

*Inference 5. Eye Christ in all the events of providence; see His hand in all that befalls you, whether it be evil or good.* "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." How much good might we get by observation of the good or evil that befalls us throughout our course!

*First, in all the evils of trouble and afflictions that befall you, eye Jesus Christ.* And set your hearts to the study of these four things in affliction:

i. *Study His sovereignty and dominion;* for He creates and forms them. They rise not from the dust, nor do they befall you casually; but He raises them up and gives them their commission. "Behold, I frame evil, and devise a device against you." He elects the instrument of your trouble; He makes the rod as afflictive as He pleaseth; He orders the continuance and end of your troubles; and they will not cease to be afflictive till Christ say, Leave off, it is enough. The centurion wisely considered this when he told Him: "I have soldiers under me, and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh," meaning that as his soldiers were at his beck and command, so diseases were at Christ's beck, to come and go as He ordered them.

ii. *Study the wisdom of Christ* in the contrivance of your troubles. And His wisdom shines out many ways in them. It is evident in choosing such kinds of trouble for you—this, and not that, because this is more apt to work upon and purge out the corruption that most predominates in you; in the degrees of your troubles—suffering them to work to such a height, else not reach their end, but no higher lest they overwhelm you.

iii. *Study the tenderness and compassion of Christ* over His afflicted. O think if the devil had but the mixing of the cup, how much more bitter would he make it! There would not be one drop of mercy in it, no, not of sparing mercy in it, which is the lowest form of mercy. But here is much mercy mixed with my troubles; there is mercy in this, that it is no worse. Am I afflicted? It is of the Lord's mercy that I am not consumed. It might have been hell as well as this. There is mercy in His supports under it. Others have been (and I might have been) left to sink and perish under my burdens. Mercy in deliverance out of it; this might have been everlasting darkness that should never have had a morning. O the tenderness of Christ over His afflicted!

iv. *Study the love of Christ* to thy soul in affliction. Did He not love thee, He would not sanctify a rod to humble or reduce thee, but let thee alone to perish in thy sin. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." This is the device of love, to recover thee to thy God and prevent thy ruin. O what an advantage it would

be thus to study Christ in all your evils that befall you!

*Second, eye and study Christ in all the good you receive from the hand of providence.* Turn both sides of your mercies and view them in all their lovely circumstances.

i. *Eye them in their suitableness.* How conveniently providence hath ordered all things for thee! Thou hast a narrow heart and a small estate suitable to it. Hadst thou more of the world, it would be like a large sail to a little boat, which would quickly pull thee under water. Thou hast that which is most suitable to thee of all conditions.

ii. *Eye the seasonableness of thy mercies, how they are timed to an hour.* Providence brings forth all its fruits in due season.

iii. *Eye the peculiar nature of thy mercies.* Others have common, thou special ones; others have but a single, thou a double sweetness in thy enjoyments—one natural from the matter of it, another spiritual from the way in which, and the end for which, it comes.

iv. *Observe the order in which providence sends thy mercies.* See how one is linked strangely to another and is a door to let in many. Sometimes one mercy is introductive of a thousand.

v. *Observe the constancy of them.* They are new every morning. How assiduously doth God visit thy soul and body! Think with thyself: if there be but a suspension of the care of Christ for one hour, that hour would be thy ruin. Thousands of evils stand round about thee, watching if Christ would but remove His eye from thee, when they would rush in and devour thee.

Could we thus study the providence of Christ in all the good and evil that befalls us in the world, then in every state we should be content (Phil. iv. 11). Then we should never be stopped, but furthered in our way by all that falls out. Then would our experience swell to great volumes which we might carry to heaven with us; and then should we answer all Christ's ends in every state He brings us into.

*Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.*

#### AN OVERRULING PROVIDENCE

There is an overruling providence  
That wisely marshals every circumstance;  
Heaven, air, and seas, and this terrestrial ball,  
With their contents, are all at His control.

There's not a particle of dust can fly,  
A sparrow fall, or cloud obscure the sky,  
A moth be crushed, or leaf fall from a tree,  
But in submission to His wise decree.

He raiseth men to sceptres and a crown,  
And at His pleasure treads the monarch down,  
His wise decrees as firm as heaven do stand,  
He's in one mind, though oft He turn His hand.

He must and will at all times keep in view  
 His glory, and His people's welfare too;  
 Bright days, dark nights, the furnace, or the flood,  
 He overrules for Zion's real good.

William Gadsby (1773-1844)

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## THE RESURRECTION

*From the "Contemplations" of Joseph Hall (1574-1656)*

Everything here had horror. The place both solitary and a sepulchre; nature abhors, as the visage, so also the region of death and corruption. The time, night; only the moon gave them some faint glimmering, for this being the seventeenth day of her age afforded some light to the latter part of the night. The business, the visitation of a dead corpse. Their zealous love hath easily overcome all these. They had followed Him in His sufferings when even His disciples left Him. They attended Him to the cross weeping. They followed Him to His grave and saw how Joseph laid Him. Even there they leave Him not, but ere it be daylight return to pay Him the last tribute of their duty. How much stronger is love than death! O blessed Jesus, why should we not imitate Thy love to us? Those whom Thou lovest, Thou lovest to the end, yea in it, yea after it. Even when we are dead, not our souls only but our very dust is dearly respected of Thee. What condition of Thine should remove our affection from Thy Person in heaven, from Thy limbs [members] on earth?

Well did these worthy women know what Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done to Thee. They saw how curiously they had wrapped Thee, how preciously they had embalmed Thee. Yet as not thinking others' beneficence could be any just excuse of theirs, they bring their own odours to Thy sepulchre to be perfumed by the touch of Thy sacred body. What thanks is it to us that others are obsequious to Thee while we are slack and niggardly? We may rejoice in others' forwardness, but if we rest in it, how small joy shall it be to us to see them go to heaven without us!

When on the Friday evening they attended Joseph to the entombing of Jesus, they marked the place, they marked the passage, they marked that inner gravestone which the owner had fitted to the mouth of the tomb, which all their care is now to remove. "Who shall roll away the stone?" That other more weighty load wherewith the vault was barred, the seal, the guard set upon both, came not perhaps into their knowledge. This was the private plot of Pilate and the priests, beyond the reach of their

thoughts.

I do not hear them say, How shall we recover the charge of our odours? or, How shall we avoid the envy and censure of our angry elders for honouring Him whom the governors of our nation have thought worthy of condemnation? The only thought they now take is, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Neither do they stay at home and move this doubt, but when they are well forward on their way resolving to try the issue. Good hearts cannot be so solicitous for anything under heaven as for removing those impediments which lie between them and their Saviour. O blessed Jesus, Thou, who art clearly revealed in heaven, art yet still both hid and sealed up from too many here upon earth. Neither is it some thin veil that is spread between Thee and them but a huge stone, even a true stone of offence, lies rolled upon the mouth of their hearts. Yea, if a second weight were added to Thy grave here, no less than three spiritual bars are interposed betwixt them and Thee above: idleness, ignorance, unbelief. Who shall roll away these stones but the same power that removed Thine? O Lord, remove our ignorance that we may know Thee; our idleness that we may seek Thee; our unbelief that we may find and enjoy Thee.

How well it succeeds when we go faithfully and conscionably [conscientiously] about our work and leave the issue to God! Lo, now God hath removed the cares of these holy women together with the gravestone. To the wicked, that falls out which they feared; to the godly, that which they wished and cared for, yea more.

Holy cares ever prove well; the worldly dry the bones and disappoint the hopes. Could these good visitants have known of a greater stone sealed, of a strong watch set, their doubts had been doubled. Now God goes beyond their thoughts, and at once removes both that which they did fear and might have feared. The stone is removed, the seal broken, the watch fled. What a scorn doth the Almighty God make of the impotent desires of men! They thought: the stone shall make the grave sure, the seal shall make the stone sure, the guard shall make both sure. Now, when they think all safe, God sends an angel from heaven above, the earth quakes beneath, the stone rolls away, the soldiers stand like carcasses, and when they have got heart enough to run away, think themselves valiant! The tomb is opened, Christ is risen, they confounded. O the vain projects of silly men! As if with one shovel full of mire they would dam up the sea; or with a clout hanged forth they would stop the sun from shining! O these spiders' webs, or houses of cards, which fond children have, as they think, skilfully framed, which the least breath breaks and ruins! Who are we, sorry worms, that we should look in any business to prevail against our Creator? What creature is so base

that He cannot arm against us to our confusion? The lice and frogs shall be too strong for Pharaoh, the worms for Herod. "There is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord."

O the marvellous pomp and magnificence of our Saviour's resurrection! The earth quakes, the angel appears, that it may be plainly seen that this divine Person now rising had the command both of heaven and earth. At the dissolution of Thy human nature, O Saviour, was an earthquake, at the re-uniting of it is an earthquake, to tell the world that the God of nature then suffered, and had now conquered. While Thou layest still in the earth, the earth was still; when Thou camest to fetch Thy own, "The earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." When Thou, our true Samson, awakedst and foundest Thyself tied with these Philistine cords and rousedst up and breakedst those hard and strong twists with a sudden power, no marvel if the room shook under Thee.

Good cause had the earth to quake when the God that made it powerfully calls for His own flesh from the usurpation of her bowels. Good cause had she to open her graves and yield up her dead in attendance to the Lord of life, whom she had presumed to detain in that cell of her darkness. What a seeming impotency was here, that Thou, who art the true Rock of Thy church, shouldest lie obscurely shrouded in Joseph's rock! Thou, that art the true Corner-stone of Thy church, shouldest be shut up with a double stone, the one of Thy grave, the other of Thy vault! Thou, by whom we were sealed to the day of our redemption, should be sealed up in a blind cavern of earth! But now what a demonstration of power doth both the world and I see in Thy glorious resurrection! The rocks tear, the graves open, the stones roll away, the dead rise and appear, the soldiers flee and tremble, saints and angels attend Thy rising. O Saviour, Thou liest down in weakness, Thou risest in power and glory; Thou liest down like a man, Thou risest like a God.

What a lively image hast Thou herein given me of the dreadful majesty of the general resurrection and Thy second appearance! Then not the earth only but "the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Not some few graves shall be open and some saints appear, but all the bars of death shall be broken, and all that sleep in their graves shall awake, and stand up from the dead before Thee. Not some one angel shall descend, but Thou, the great Angel of the covenant, attended with thousand thousands of those mighty spirits. And if these stout soldiers were so filled with terror at the feeling of an earthquake and the sight of an angel that they had scarce breath left in them for the time to witness them alive, where shall Thy enemies appear, O Lord, in the day of Thy terrible appearance, when the earth shall reel and vanish, and the elements shall be on a flame about their ears, and the

heavens shall wrap up as a scroll?

O God, Thou mightest have removed this stone by the force of Thine earthquake as well as rive other rocks, yet Thou wouldest rather use the ministry of an angel; or Thou that gavest Thyself life, and gavest being both to the stone and the earth, couldest more easily have moved the stone than moved the earth; but it was Thy pleasure to make use of an angel's hand. And now he that would ask why Thou wouldest do it rather by an angel than by Thyself may as well ask why Thou dost not rather give Thy law by Thine own immediate hand than by the ministration of angels; why by an angel Thou struckest the Israelites with plagues, the Assyrians with the sword; why an angel appeared to comfort Thee after Thy temptation and agony, when Thou wert able to comfort Thyself? Why Thou usest the influences of heaven to fruite[n] [fructify] the earth; why Thou employest second causes in all events, when Thou couldst do all things alone? It is good reason Thou shouldst serve Thyself of Thine own. Neither is there any ground to be required, whether of their motion or rest, besides Thy will.

Thou didst raise Thyself, the angels removed the stone. They that could have no hand in Thy resurrection, yet shall have a hand in removing outward impediments, not because Thou needest but because Thou wouldest. Like as Thou alone didst raise Lazarus, Thou badest others let him loose. Works of omnipotency Thou reservest to Thine own immediate performance; ordinary actions Thou doest by subordinate means.

Although this act of the angel was not merely with respect to Thee; but partly to those devout women, to ease them of their care, to manifest unto them Thy resurrection. So dutiful are those glorious spirits not only to Thee, their Maker, but even to the meanest of Thy servants, especially in the furtherance of all their spiritual designs. Let us bring our odours, they will be sure to roll away the stone. Why do not we imitate them? We pray to do Thy will here as they do in heaven. If we do not act our wishes, we do but mock Thee in our devotions.

How glorious did this angel of Thine appear! The terrified soldiers saw his face like lightning. Both they and the women saw his garments shining bright and white as snow; such a presence became his errand. It was fit that as in Thy passion the sun was darkened and all creatures were clad with heaviness, so in Thy resurrection the best of Thy creatures should testify their joy and exultation in the brightness of their habit. That as we on festival days put on our best clothes, so Thine angels should celebrate this blessed festivity with a meet representation of glory. They could not but enjoy our joy to see the work of man's redemption thus fully finished; and if there be joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, how much more when a multitude of sinners is

perfectly ransomed from death and restored to salvation? Certainly if but one or two appeared, all rejoiced, all triumphed. Neither could they but be herein sensible of their own happy advantage, who by Thy mediation are confirmed in their glorious estate, since Thou by the blood of Thy cross and power of Thy resurrection hast reconciled things, not in earth only, but in heaven.

But above all other, the love of Thee, their God and Creator must needs heighten their joy and make Thy glory theirs. It is their perpetual work to praise Thee. How much more now, when such an occasion was offered as never had been since the world began, never could be after! When Thou the God of Spirits hadst vanquished all the spiritual powers of darkness! When Thou, the Lord of life, hadst conquered death for Thee and all Thine so as they may now boldly insult over their last enemy! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Certainly if heaven can be capable of an increase of joy and felicity, never had those blessed spirits so great a cause of triumph and gratulation as in this day of Thy glorious resurrection. How much more, O dear Jesus, should we men whose flesh Thou didst assume, unite, revive; for whose sake, and in whose stead, Thou didst vouchsafe to suffer and die; whose arrearages Thou didst pay in death and acquittedst in Thy resurrection; whose souls are discharged, whose bodies shall be raised by the power of Thy rising. How much more should we think we have cause to be overjoyed with the happy memory of this great work of Thy divine power and inconceivable mercy!

Lo now, how weak soever I am in myself, yet in the confidence of this victorious resurrection of my Saviour, I dare boldly challenge and defy you, O all ye adverse powers! Do the worst ye can to my soul, in despite of you it shall be safe.

Is it sin that threatens me? Behold this resurrection of my Redeemer publishes my discharge. My Surety was arrested and cast into the prison of His grave. Had not the utmost farthing of mine arrearages been paid, He could not have come forth. He *is* come forth. The sum is fully satisfied. What danger can there be of a discharged debt?

Is it the wrath of God? Wherefore is that but for sin? If my sin be defrayed, that quarrel is at an end. And if my Saviour suffered it for me, how can I fear to suffer it in myself? That infinite justice hates to be twice paid. He is risen, therefore He hath satisfied. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather that is risen again."

Is it death itself? Lo! my Saviour that overcame death by dying, hath triumphed over him in His resurrection. How can I now fear a conquered enemy? What harm is there in the serpent but for his sting? "The sting of death is sin." That is pulled out by my powerful Redeemer. It cannot now hurt me.

**THE JUBILEE***By Henry Law*

Who can return too often to the truth that Jewish services are framed with closest references to Christ? This is their wondrous worth. Hence day by day the victims bleed and constant rites portray the scheme of grace. He who is Spirit-taught distinctly reads the gospel in this page of types.

But one recurring season is as the sun in the bright firmament of signs. It is the year of Jubilee. Faith here delights to revel with especial joy. It is the richest antepast of gospel-truth. May we gain wisdom from its various parts!

In Israel's land each fiftieth year is universal rest. No toiling hand may move. The sickle and the spade are laid aside. Tillage and harvest sleep. No seed may now be sown. No crop may now be reaped. The grape, the olive, wave their treasures, but no gatherer collects. Repose is the one law for man, for beast, for soil. A year-long Sabbath reigns. Here God asserts His sovereign right to earth. No fields are to be tilled or used except as He is pleased to grant.

This is a lesson which man slowly learns. His pride is prone to call the lower world his own. He thinks, he acts, as if he were creation's lord. His fancy builds a throne and crowns himself the king. But this decree establishes God's rule. We are dependent tenants of His fields. When He permits, we occupy. When He forbids, we pause. And never is the gift enjoyed but when we meekly bow before the glorious Giver. Happy the man whose grateful heart oft sings, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." This is the Jubilee's first note.

We next are taught God's power to provide. Plenty depends not solely on our prudent thought. He wills, and crops abound. He speaks, and garners hold enough. Thus through this year of rest want never came. This marvel is more marvellous because the Jubilee succeeds a Sabbath-year. In that too, seeding and reaping had not stirred. In that, no grain had been collected with precautionary care. But God gave forth a treble harvest in each forty-eighth year. Thus through the long repose, previous abundance ministered full food. As the poor widow's meal and oil, it proved an unexhausted feast. As Joseph's well-replenished store, it fed the hungry and never failed.

When God provides, need disappears. The unbelieving heart will sometimes strive by undue means to heap up wealth. Alas! what madness and what sin! The unpermitted gain is poverty's worst penury. None can succeed without the Lord; and none shall want who truly follow Him. Faith has the richest board. It works when God says, Work. It rests when God says, Rest, and in obedience thrives.

Next mark, this year is emblem of soul-rest in Christ. The soul is the real man. There is no gain except the soul get benefit.

Before the refuge of the cross is seen, the awakened mind frets like the troubled sea. It has intense desire to flee the coming wrath. It trembles at the prospect of unending woe. Heaven seems a height beyond all reach. Hell gapes before the feet. Can there be peace? All efforts must be made. Each nerve is strained to form anew the inner man, to bring to God the offering of a better life, to blot out guilt by tears and sighs and prayers and pious forms and self-inflicted pains and a long train of doings and undoings. Such striving is in vain. Wrath is not thus appeased nor heaven thus won. But when the Spirit shows Christ's finished work, then toil for reconciliation ends. Christ's blood atones. What more can be required? Christ's righteousness completely covers. What can be added to it? The soul sees this and sits content beneath the sheltering shadow of the cross. Its Jubilee is come. It rests in Christ and only lives in exercise of grateful love. Reader, reflect that man can never be self-saved. Jesus is *all* for sin's remission and repose of heart.

Observe the entrance to this consecrated year. It instantly begins when the Atonement-day has ceased. When penitence has deeply mourned, when the Scapegoat has borne sins out of sight, when the High Priest has sprinkled the mercy-seat, this holy season dawns.

A light here shines upon the path which leads to rest. It lies through penitence and sense of pardon given. How many live with little knowledge of their state! They feel no burden pressing them to hell. They smite not on the breast with penitential shame. Their life may be a drowsy dream but it is far from gospel peace. To them no Jubilee is come.

Others, with consciousness of soul disease, see not the precious remedy. They lay not the hand upon a Saviour's head. They tell not out to Him their miserable need. They do not thus transfer the overwhelming weight. To them the Scapegoat is an idle tale. Therefore to them no Jubilee is come.

Others rejoice not in a risen Lord. They see Him not within the veil. Darkness conceals His great transactions there. To them no Jubilee is come. Reader, forget not it is acquaintance with atonement made, and Jesus sprinkling the throne above, which introduces Jubilee-repose.

And now the day arrives. The trumpet sounds throughout the land. In every place, by every ear, the long-expected notes are heard. They tell no doubtful tale. They speak, and Israel knows, that Jubilee's great joys are theirs. They speak, and universal happiness prevails.

Such is your work, ye ministers of Christ. The gladdest tidings are your theme. Angels might covet your employ. Oh!

see that your lips publish rest in Christ. Then hearts will joy in your report. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God."

There was much cause for Israel's delight. The downcast debtor now was free. The bondman cast away the yoke. All forfeited estates returned. The oppressor might no more oppress. No servant trembled at a lord's stern voice. The former owner claimed his father's fields. The ancient landmarks were rebuilt and liberty resumed its sway. In every house, in every heart, there was a consciousness of relief. Sorrow and mourning fled away.

So there is deliverance in Christ. The gospel is true Jubilee in every sense. We are poor debtors. But our Lord brings help. We owe obedience to our Maker's will. Our time, our strength, our means, our opportunities, our every faculty, our minds, our frames, are His. We hold a trust, and stewards must be faithful. But is it so? Conscience turns pale. Each hour bears witness to a misused gift. God has been robbed. His own has not been paid. His goods have been misspent. Denial is in vain. Our debts exceed the moments of our lives. But justice must have reckoning. There is no trifling with God. Sinner, look onward to the day when you must face each charge. What can you bring to wipe away your score? Self gives no hope. Your best at every moment fails to meet that moment's dues. If you this day did all, the service leaves past duties unfulfilled. Your state then is insolvency. What can you say why justice should not now arrest you?

But hark! The Jubilee is come. Christ has sought earth with treasure in His hands. He cries, Tell me what justice needs. The amount is vast. But he avails to pay. The scales are heavy. But He pours in His reconciling death. Its value mightily outweighs. The roll of strict demand is long and dark. His blood obliterates each charge. He touches, and the page is whiter than the whitest snow. Thus all His ransomed ones are free. Let the believer then rejoice in his glad Jubilee. No debt remains. No creditor affrights. Without man's money and self's aid, the payment is all paid by the grand Surety, Christ.

The Jubilee relaxed the ties of bondage. So too Christ liberates from fetters. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Each soul apart from Him is a poor slave. Tyrants are many and their yoke is hard.

First, Satan enchains the heart, and drags His vassals to vile service. There is no will, no power to resist. By nature all lie prostrate at His feet. But Jesus wrestles with this cruel foe and hurls him from his throne, and breaks his sceptre and gives him a death-wound. He can no more detain the free-men of the Lord. He may, he will, assail, affright and tempt. He may gain some success. But it is brief. All who are Christ's abhor his sway and

breathe the air of liberty. The gospel Jubilee sets free from Satan's power.

Then too sin rules the captive race of men. It subjugates each soul, and it must reign until expelled by Christ. All moral principle, all sense of shame, all longings to be pure, are weak as feathers to withstand the flood. But when Christ shows His dying love, and His blood streaming to atone, then a new passion gains the throne. The yoke is burst. The gospel Jubilee sets free from sin.

Next, this vile world is a foul tyrant. Its smile allures. Its frown deters. Its fashions force compliance. Its laws exact submission. It drives its millions to a slavish toil. But when Jesus unmasks the monster's hideous filth, when He reveals the beauties of the gospel-walk, then the chain snaps, the enemy is loathed, and its debasing ways are shunned. The gospel Jubilee sets free from the world's snares.

Death too is a fearful tyrant. Its chilly features terrify. It points to a near grave, it stretches forth an icy hand, strong to bear hence. The stoutest quail. The fear of dying often makes it misery to live. None can relieve but Christ. He promises to meet His people in their hour of need, to give His arm as their support, to brighten all the darkness with His smile. Death's dread thus dies. Its coming is a welcome ear to carry to a better home. The gospel Jubilee sets free from death's affrights.

The Jubilee restores inheritance. Here Christ again appears. Sin wrought a cruel work. It drove man from a fair abode. It forced him to a wilderness of weeds and woe. God's present smile was lost. The blessing of communion ceased. Life was an outcast drudgery. Death led to outcast anguish. But Christ instates in more than Eden-heritage. He places in a land of peace where God is our near God for ever. Here more is found than was destroyed by sin. They have a sure estate, who realize this property in God. All that He is, all that He has, is theirs. Reader, Christ came, He lived, He died, He reigns, to grant this Jubilee to souls. Hear His own words, and may the Spirit bless them! "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Blessed Jesus, Thy people praise Thee as their life, their liberty, their ransom, their peace, their joy, their hope, their heaven, their glory. Faith lifts its hands, held by no chains, to bless Thee. Love wings its way, checked by no bands, to serve Thee. Praise sings aloud, awed by no tyrant's frown, to adore Thee. The whole soul, free as air, reposes in a Jubilee of joy.



**THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER**

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. Hill at Ebenezer Chapel, Luton, on 17th March, 1971.*

**Text:** "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13).

We are told that Jesus "spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." Now the Lord Jesus Christ never spoke a parable merely to amuse or to entertain. Whenever he spoke a parable, it had in it deep teaching, deep truth, and so we find it here; for He brings before us two men who went into the temple to pray. Now between these men there was a difference, and had you asked any of the people about these men, they would have soon told you there was a great difference between them. One was regarded as righteous, as holy, as a religious man, whereas the other was looked upon as a sinner, and a sinner of the worst kind, not really fit to be in the company of such a man as the Pharisee.

But there were other differences. There were differences in their feelings. The Pharisee felt completely satisfied with himself, whereas the publican felt dissatisfied with himself. And then, there was a difference in their prayers. The Pharisee "prayed thus with himself"; the publican prayed unto God. There was the difference. And then there was a difference in their justification. The Pharisee justified himself; the publican was justified by God. There was a difference, a vast difference between these two men that went into the temple to pray. When the Pharisee prayed, there was no confession in his prayer. What he did, in actual fact, was to parade his virtues, but when the publican prayed, his prayer was all confession. It was full of confession. It was a very short prayer, but it was a very full prayer, and it is far, far better for a prayer to be of few words and full than to be of many words and meaningless. Oh, my friends, here we have a full prayer, but it was a very short prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and in this man we have brought before us real religion.

Well, in coming to our text I want to notice just three things, and they are these:

- I. His actions.
- II. His prayer.
- III. His success.

I. We have his actions, and his actions are three. "And the publican, standing afar off." That was one. The second was a casting of his eyes downward: "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven." And the third is this: "but smote upon his breast." Those are the actions of this publican. Let us notice them.

First of all, *he stood afar off*. Now we can well imagine that the Pharisee would get as near to the Holy of Holies as he possibly could. Not so this man; he stood afar off. And why? Because he had a sense of his own unworthiness, a sense of his own nothingness. He knew and felt something of the holiness of his God and he dare not presume. Here is real religion, you know. He knew well that his sins had separated him from God and his very posture bore witness to the truth of God's words, "Your sins have separated between you and your God," so he stood afar off, he did not dare to presume. When the Lord works in a sinner's heart it makes him honest before his God. He does not presume, and so we have this first action here recorded. Remember, the Lord did not speak these words for no purpose when he said, "And the publican, standing afar off." Isn't this what sin has done? It has separated. We are afar off by nature—everyone. The Scripture clearly tells us that we have all gone astray like lost sheep. It is true of every one of His dear people.

But then, we are told, he "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven." Guilt upon the conscience was here. *He was afraid to look up*. He knew that his sins deserved the just condemnation of God's holy law. "He would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven." This is where a consciousness of guilt will bring a person. It will make him hang his head with shame. It will cause him to weep with godly Ezra, and this is how Ezra prayed. He said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." Ah, my friends, do we know anything of this? If the Lord has dealt with us graciously, there will be times when He speaks to us, and when He speaks to us, He will tell us of our sins. I do not mean so much those outward things—perhaps we may be kept, mercifully kept—but He will tell us of those inward sins. When he does this, do we not have to hang our head in shame? For we have to acknowledge the truth, and do we not pour out tears and cries unto Him with fresh confession? All this is how the Lord deals with His people. He will make us to know continually our failings so that there is no looking up, but there is a sense of guilt, a hanging of the head in shame with tears of contrition.

But then, not only so; *he "smote upon his breast."* So this man, he stood afar off, this man hung his head in shame and then he smote upon his breast, and I believe that by this he indicated that he knew the very source from which sin springs in a man. There might be no outward rebellion, but it is deep within.

"A wicked heart is no small part  
Of my distress and shame."

That is what the poet said, and that is what His people are made

to know and feel. And so it was, he smote upon his breast as though he would smite his sins. When the Lord Jesus Christ was upon the earth, He spoke of the heart and of that which proceeded from it. We find that He says, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." They come from the heart. Now it is very evident that this man felt the plague of his own heart. He felt his own sore, and so it was, he smote upon his breast. Do we know anything of this, a feeling sense of sin; and though we may smite our breast, it will not bring us ease and comfort, it will not bring peace? But I will tell you what *will* bring peace—to be led by faith to Calvary and there to see our sins smitten in Christ. "He was stricken, smitten and afflicted" when the sins of His dear people were laid upon Him. This is where we shall find peace. This is where we shall see what our sins cost Him.

Here are the actions then which clearly portray that he knew that his sins had separated him from God. He stood afar off, he hung his head in guilty shame, and acknowledged his heart to be the spring, the source of his sins. Now if we know something of this, we shall understand the prayer of David when he said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Outward reformation is not sufficient.

II. Well now, having noticed his actions, we will notice his prayer, and this is his prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is a short prayer, as I said a moment ago, but a very full prayer. "God be merciful to me a sinner." We don't find that he made any rash vows, we don't find that he promised to do better. We also see that in this prayer he does not excuse any fault. He makes no excuse. How easy it is to begin to excuse ourselves! "Well, of course, we can't do this because of that, or we do this because of something else"; but this man made no excuse, he made no rash vow, he promised nothing, but he cried from his very heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Expositors tell us that really this should be translated, "God be merciful to me *the* sinner," that is, the only sinner, the sinner here, the only sinner—such he felt himself to be in that temple. He did not begin to compare himself as better than the Pharisee in any way. No, he felt himself to be *the* sinner, and when we get into that place, we do not look at the sins of others. We do not think of the wrongs which perhaps we may fancy are done even to us. All that is lost sight of if we are in our right place. To be the meanest we are content, aren't we? "God be merciful to me a sinner." We are willing then to be in the lowest place. If the Lord smile upon us, that is the thing that matters, when this is the cry of the heart: "God be merciful to me *the* sinner."

Now if the Lord has begun a gracious work in our hearts,

if we know anything of His dealings with us, we do know this: that this was the very essence of our first prayer. I do not mean that we perhaps first uttered it in this way, but this was the essence of our first prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." And then, friends, if it was the essence of our first prayer, haven't we to acknowledge that it is the essence of our prayers still, because we need mercy daily? We cannot do without it. The poet was right when he said,

"Without thy sweet mercy I could not live here,  
Sin soon would reduce me to utter despair."

And so it is. We have to come before the Lord begging mercy every hour, and won't this be the prayer of our lips in a dying hour? Will we want anything more than this, "God be merciful to me a sinner"?

There is everything in this prayer. This is all that a poor sinner needs. But remember, when he said, "God be *merciful* to me a sinner," our language does not express the fulness of his prayer.\* We are told by those who understand the original that this man had his eye to the sacrifices, and he knew well that these sacrifices pointed to a precious Christ and His sacrifice. His prayer was directed to God through Christ and through His sacrifice; for Christ is the true sacrifice, He is the true altar. What he did was to beg for mercy in this way: "Be to me as Thou art when Thou dost behold atoning blood, the blood of sacrifices." What he wanted was to be made to know feelingly that which the Lord spoke unto His people of old: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," for God to view him through the blood, to be propitious toward him. Ah, this was it, my friends, this was his plea. Now do we know anything of it? The poet puts it so sweetly in that hymn that we sang:

"Mercy through blood I make my plea,  
O God, be merciful to me."

Now, do you know what it is thus to desire mercy?

When we look at this prayer of this man, we see he did not beg for mercy *because* he was penitent. That isn't the way in which mercy comes, you know, though those who seek mercy are those who mourn over sin. He did not beg for mercy *because* he was praying. Oh no! He did not say, "Lord, now I am praying, have mercy upon me." He did not pray for mercy *because* he now hated his sin. No, he prayed for mercy through the Sacrifice, through the blood, and that is the only way that mercy will ever flow down to a poor sinner. The poet utters it well when he says, "Think not"—and oh, how easy it is to think

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\*The original contains the thought of "propitiation."

this—but he says,

“Think not that God will or may  
Pardon any other way.”

*The precious blood of Christ is the only way of pardon.*

“Sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.”

Oh, do we know what it is to pray the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? When the Lord first dealt with us, it wasn't the sins of others, was it? and we are in our right place when it is our own sins still. We come before the Lord with no sinner before our eyes but self, and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

III. But then, we have his success. We have his actions, we have his prayer. Now just to come to his success. I must make reference to the following verse, where Jesus said this: “I tell you”—and He never told the people anything to deceive them—He said, “I tell you that this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.” So this prayer met with success, and the success is that which the psalmist speaks of when he writes that, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” And he says: “For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found.” And so he *did* pray and pray in a time when the Lord was found. None ever did come to the Lord with such a prayer as this and was sent empty away, was refused. No, my dear friends, none ever came seeking mercy through blood, the pardon of sin through the atoning work of a precious Christ, and perished.

Now look at this man. He stood afar off because he felt afar off. But now he is justified. And what does this mean? He is brought nigh; and what is it that brings him nigh? It is the precious blood of Christ. Yes, it is that precious blood, the blood of Christ that brought you nigh. Invaluable blood!

But then, he hung his head with shame because he knew his condemnation was just. He felt it. He could not declare himself to be “not guilty.” You know in our courts of law they are advised to plead “not guilty” so that they can have what they term a “fair trial,” though they may know well that they are really guilty. Ah, this man was honest before God; he hung his head with shame. He said in effect, “Guilty Lord.” He felt justly condemned. But being justified, he is free from condemnation. By that atoning work, Christ has delivered His people from the condemnation of the law.

Yes, so he is brought nigh, he is delivered from the condemnation, he is justified, he is cleansed from his sins, he is viewed

without spot. The Pharisee had justified himself. He had spoken of his own self-righteousness, and this we have most solemnly to say: God never will justify the self-righteous. My friends, God never has, and God never will justify a person who is self-righteous. If He should justify a self-righteous person, what would it mean? It would mean that the sacrifice of Christ was needless. If self-righteous people could be justified, there was no necessity for the sacrifice which the Lord Christ offered up on Calvary's cross, but the Lord justifies His people freely by the redeeming blood, the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus. No other way of being justified except as we are brought to see our interest in the coming, in the work, in the death of the dear Redeemer.

Well, the Lord Jesus spoke this parable to teach us truth, and here is the truth. Where the Holy Spirit works, there will be true confession of sin because they will be convinced of sin and know that it has separated them from God. There will be the hanging of our head in shame. We do not then boast of creature righteousness. "Nothing but sin I Thee can give," and there will be the smiting of our breast, the acknowledging of that evil within, all unclean. But there will be the cry, and the cry will be for mercy. There will be the plea, and it will be that atoning blood, that precious blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, and that plea will not be in vain. The sinner will be justified, and, my friends, this is to be delivered from condemnation. "Justified freely by His blood, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." There is no other way of pardon, of peace, of healing, of cure, but by the blood of Jesus.

Now the gospel makes this known; and the Lord Jesus here is proclaiming the gospel, and He is giving sweet and gracious encouragement to poor feeling sinners, and this is why we can still proclaim that

"The vilest sinner out of hell,  
Who lives to feel his need,  
Is welcome to the throne of grace,  
The Saviour's blood to plead."

And he will never plead it in vain. None ever have pleaded it in vain. The great enemy of souls, if he can, will turn us away from the Sacrifice, turn us away from this plea; but here is a plea, my friends, which will avail, and those who are thus led to plead that precious blood will know what it is for the Lord to justify them, to declare them all clean, to declare them without spot, and they shall rejoice then in His salvation, that which He has accomplished. They will give Him the glory. They will come where He is.

Now, we are told "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other." I don't want to strain language, but as I was thinking upon it, it came to my mind like this: that when we each go to our houses, we go there to rest. But then there is

the last house—what we term the house of all living—that we must come to when we are taken to our last resting-place; and thinking of that, I thought: It was said of this man, “He went down to his house justified.” Will it be said of you, will it be said of me, he “went down to his house justified”? Only if we are washed in Jesus’ precious blood and clothed in His righteousness. The Lord grant that it may be so.

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## J. C. PHILPOT’S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### IV. Strict Communion

*Many people cannot understand our reason for not receiving at the Lord’s table a member of a church not of the same faith and order if he is a godly person and baptized by immersion. J. C. Philpot deals with this question in answer to the inquiry: Is it scriptural for us to admit to the Lord’s table a member of a General Baptist church if it is felt that he possesses grace?*

All Strict Baptist churches consider such a practice subversive of their principles, and a sanctioning of error and disorder. As some really God-fearing persons in our churches may not clearly see this, we will devote a few words to the subject.

We fully admit that it may seem at first sight narrow and rigid, and to some almost unchristian, not to allow members of General Baptist churches, assuming they bear marks of grace, to sit down with the members of Strict Baptist churches. But what we are to consider is not so much *individuals as a principle*; and then what seems harsh as regards persons may appear quite right as regards things. Now as a principle for a church to act upon—and here we must consider not the private feelings of individual members, but the church as “the pillar and ground of truth”—is it right in a church as Christ’s representative to sanction error and erroneous men? But this it certainly does whilst it admits members of erroneous churches\* to sit down at the table; for in sanctioning the members, it indirectly, if not directly, sanctions both the church and the minister. Besides, what evidence have we that, whilst they hold such errors, which we must assume they do as long as they continue members of a general church, they are partakers of grace? The General Baptist churches are sunk in free will, and are for the most part deadly enemies to a free grace gospel. How then can we welcome to the Lord’s table those who deny His finished work, are not stripped and emptied of self, and fight against those precious truths whence we derive all our hope? If it be answered that these members do not, we may

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\* As J. K. Popham wrote in 1923: In considering the question of transient communion, regard must be had, not to the personal experience of the applicant, but *the standing of the church where he is a member.*

reply: Their minister does, and the church with which they stand connected, and whilst in union with such a church, the voice and acts of the church are *their* voice and acts; for were they to testify against the doctrines held by the minister and the church, their membership would come to a speedy end. But would we admit their ministers to our pulpits? Why, then, admit their members to our table? "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" How then can the friends of a particular redemption walk with the friends of a universal one, or the lovers of free grace unite with the lovers of free will; or how can those who cleave wholly and solely to Christ's righteousness walk with those who hold with part of their own? At the Lord's table we want love and union, to be joined together in one heart and one judgment. But how can this be the case when members of general churches unite with us at this solemn ordinance? If they be children of God and have received the truth in the love of it, why do they still sit under error? Why still continue members of erroneous churches? Why not "come out and be separate," as the Lord bids?

But why do they want to sit down with the Strict Baptists? Have they not a table of their own? Why do they not keep to it? Why do they want us to sanction their errors? Most probably the reason of their continuing members of dead churches is some flesh-pleasing cause, or some worldly, self-indulgent motive. Why should this be sanctioned and covered over, and they thus really strengthened in their evil-doing? If they are one in heart with us, why not unite with us openly? If not one in heart, why do they want to sit down with us? By making a stand against their sitting down at the table—not from any prejudice against the individual, but on the ground of truth and conscience—we may lead them to consider their ways, which are not good; and thus our seeming harshness may be really more profitable to them than flesh-pleasing softness. As long as churches of truth countenance error by word or deed, in principle or practice, it will be thought of little consequence. Thus truth and error get confounded, the church and the world insensibly mingled, the barriers set up against false doctrine pulled down, and separation from all evil eventually nullified.

The only way is to make a stand at the outset, and not give way in this apparently little thing and other seemingly mere trifle, as men estimate them—as if any part of God's truth or worship were a matter of indifference—but to resist the entrance of all error and all evil from the beginning, as one would at once stop a small leak in a ship, or trample out a spark in a room, lest the former sink the vessel and other burn down the house. A Strict Baptist church that does not stand firm to its faith and order will soon tolerate other innovations, till at last it loses all its distinctive features, and sinks down into a mere worldly church, a wreck

and ruin of what it once was. As in individuals, sin begins by littles, and one thing leads on to another till crime is consummated; so in churches, error and declension usually commence by, "Is it not a little one?"

Upon these grounds, then, we resist the introduction of the members of General Baptist churches to the Lord's table as sanctioning error, breaking down our faith and order, and opening a way to a union with the world and all its evil results.

### DISTINGUISHING GRACE

In songs of sublime adoration and praise,  
Ye pilgrims for Zion who press,  
Break forth, and extol the great Ancient of Days,  
His rich and distinguishing grace.

His love, from eternity fixed upon you,  
Broke forth and discovered its flame,  
When each with the cords of His kindness He drew,  
And brought you to love His great Name.

O had He not pitied the state you were in,  
Your bosoms His love had ne'er felt;  
You all would have lived, would have died, too, in sin,  
And sunk with the load of your guilt.

What was there in you that could merit esteem,  
Or give the Creator delight?  
'Twas "Even so, Father," you ever must sing,  
"Because it seemed good in Thy sight."

'Twas all of Thy grace we were brought to obey  
While others were suffered to go  
The road which by nature we chose as our way,  
Which leads to the regions of woe.

Then give all the glory to His holy Name,  
To Him all the glory belongs;  
Be yours the high joy still to sound forth His fame,  
And crown Him in each of your songs.

Keith.

### BOOK NOTICE

**John was a Baptist, so was his Master, so am I**, by E. J. Knight; 16 page booklet; price 15p, post paid; published by Gospel Tidings Publications; obtainable from N. Roe, 36 Marlborough Road, Sheffield, S10 1DB.

Written in reply to a pamphlet *Why I am not a Baptist*, this is an excellent statement of the Baptist position in answer to those who contend that infant baptism is scriptural. When we first came across a rare copy a few years ago, we were so impressed that we made careful notes. We are pleased that it is now made available in this country, and recommend it especially to any of our friends who may be attacked concerning the Baptist position.

### OBITUARY

**Albert Edward Jenkins**, an honourable member of the church at Uffington for almost eighteen years, died in the Lord on July 5th, 1971, aged 80. He was one of a family of nine children and was favoured to have a gracious mother. Writing of how his mother used to gather her children around her and sought to instruct them from the Word of God, he said:

"In answer to her many prayers, that precious Name was planted in my heart and I was convinced of my sin and felt a lost, ruined sinner. At the funeral of my mother, the seed sown began to bear fruit in godly repentance and sorrow for sin; and later I believe a precious Christ was revealed to me and His finished work as the only hope of my salvation."

After living at Minety for nearly twenty-five years, he and his wife returned to Uffington. He was led to walk in the ordinance of believer's baptism and was baptized by Mr. E. J. Knight in August, 1953. It was wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit taught him, for the work of grace deepened in his soul. He was brought to feel his utter dependence on the Lord.

In a letter to a friend he wrote :

"They must all [earthly things] pass away and our wanderings here will soon come to a close—like the grass which groweth up; in the morning it flourisheth, in the evening it is cut down and withereth. I can say, 'O bless the Lord, my soul, and forget not all His benefits, countless as the sand.'"

Speaking of a prayer meeting he said :

"How barren I felt! If the dear Lord did not open my mouth, I must be dumb. I have to beg for help. May the Lord deliver me from taking a ready-made prayer to the desk. The Lord said, Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst; and if indeed we are gathered together in His dear Name, then the Holy Spirit will teach us how to pray."

Mr. Jenkins and his wife came as residents to the Bethesda Home at Haydock in 1964. His wife died in January, 1968, which was a great sorrow to him, but he was upheld and sustained in the loss and trial. He loved the habitation of the Lord's house and had some profitable hearing times under the preached word, once in particular under a sermon from: "Is there anything too hard for Me?" He said :

"The Lord knows I have had to come into my little room again and again, shut the door, and go down on my knees, if the Lord will lend a listening ear. And then to get such an answer as I feel I did! What more do I want than patience to wait on? What would we do, dear friend, if His *shalls* and *wills* could be moved?"

Mr. Jenkins was very happy and most useful at the Home, both inside, and in looking after the gardens and greenhouse. He manifested a quiet sober spirit in the Home and in the cause of God at Haydock. He was so unobtrusive in all he did. He was a humble, useful, exercised man of God who walked in the fear of the Lord, and was never absent from the services or prayer meeting. In September, 1970, he was led to marry one of the residents in the Home, and for the short time they were joined together, their union was very happy.

On July 1st, he went into hospital for a minor operation and hoped to come back to the Home later the same day; but our ways are not the Lord's ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts. He was kept in, and his condition rapidly deteriorated. We visited him on the Saturday afternoon. He was very ill and they gave little hope of recovery. During the short time we had together, we had a sweet, profitable season. He asked me to read Psalm lxxii and speak in prayer, and said afterwards, "I heard every word and felt Christ to be precious to me." On another friend visiting him in the evening, he said though his pain was agonizing,

it was nothing when he was led to think of the sufferings of Jesus. The last verse of hymn 591 was quoted to him and he felt it to be very sweet in his painful condition :

“ The time is now fixed and soon it will come,  
When Christ will His messenger send,  
To fetch him from Meshech and carry him home,  
And then all his sorrows shall end.”

On the Monday evening, Christ *did* send His messenger and took him to his eternal home, just after his dear wife had left the hospital. He is greatly missed in the Bethesda Home and in the cause of truth at Haydock. Our loss is his eternal gain.

The interment was in St. Mark's graveyard, Haydock, on Saturday, 10th July, after a service in the chapel where formerly he loved to be present. May the Lord sustain and bless the widow, and sanctify the loss to his brothers and sisters.

D.T.E.

**Florence Nellie Honeysett**, member of the church at Grove Road, Eastbourne, for 20 years and at Providence, Cranbrook, for 28 years, entered her eternal rest on August 23rd, 1971, aged 76.

She was born at Rudgwick, near Horsham, where she attended the Congregational chapel. Here she had a few early impressions and often conversed with a cousin about her own age on the way home. In this chapel, when about 13, she believed she saw Christ on the cross by faith.

In her late teens, she began to indulge in worldly pleasures with those with whom she worked. On one such occasion in Brighton Hippodrome, she was struck with such terror that she feared the ceiling would fall on her. She could never go again. Later she was brought under deep conviction of sin, and was frequently on her knees begging for pardon.

Coming into contact with her future husband (Mr. R. J. Honeysett, now pastor at Cranbrook), she attended Grove Road Chapel, Eastbourne, with him. The ministry entered into her experience, and she was amazed to read hymn 295 (“ I asked the Lord that I might grow ”), finding that it expressed just what she had passed through.

On one occasion at home in the kitchen, she was stopped with the word : “ We love Him because He first loved us.” This she always felt gave her the seal of the spirit of adoption. Another word given some years later which she always cherished was, “ Behold the Lamb of God.” Once during a very special trial, she heard Mr. Lewin at Tunbridge Wells on, “ My grace is sufficient for thee.” Among other things he said, “ The trial may continue, but God's grace will be all-sufficient.” It was made such a special time to her, the burden was lifted, and she felt she could go on in the strength and comfort of that grace. During a severe illness in 1932, there were many fears for her life. She felt she would not recover and was given sweet submission and a readiness to go, but the Lord in mercy spared. Psalm cxvi was made very special, in particular verses 1 and 2 : “ I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications,” etc.

There was much illness in the following years. Once in hospital the words, “ Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee,” were made a great comfort. The following notes were made by her husband at various times :

*June 16th, 1964.* At our Tuesday evening prayer meeting I had spoken of love to the Trinity. She referred to a time when living at Hawkhurst (between 1943 and 1948) when she specially felt that love, and knelt down and repeated the doxology.

*January 13th, 1965.* Shovers Green New Year Services—Mr. C. A. Wood's text in the evening was, “ Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride,

the Lamb's wife." She said, "I have much enjoyed it, and I have in measure seen the glory."

*June 22nd, 1965.* She said, "This morning I thought of the words and felt I had the truth of them, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.'"

*March 19th, 1966 (her 71st birthday).* She said, "I have felt help and sweetness from Psalm xxiii. 6: 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' particularly the words, 'I will dwell.'"

*January 25th, 1968.* Mrs. Honeysett wrote: "Last Sunday morning on waking, I had the awful feeling that I was 'lost, lost,' and I was afraid there was no hope. My dear husband tried to help me but I could get no comfort. I said, 'If I ask Him to receive me, Will He say me nay?' I did try to pray. The hymn, 'Just as I am, without one plea,' suited me and the last few verses of Psalm xxvii. But now coming to the service. When we sang the first hymn ('Come, my soul, thy suit prepare'), it was my prayer. The second ('Be still, my heart, these anxious cares') had a calming effect. Then my husband again took, 'For He taught them as One having authority.' It was all for me, especially when he quoted, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' It broke me down as I knew I was that character. The last hymn ('Blessed are the humble souls that see') was very fitting to my case. It has produced a calm and peace."

*Middle of 1968.* During a rather trying experience, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee," was given with power to her, and repeated in several ways with much comfort; also some time later the verse, "O that I could now adore Him, Like the heavenly hosts above," was made very sweet.

During the last year of her life, her health much deteriorated. Her husband further notes:

*June 7th, 1971.* Our evening reading was Psalm xlvi. She said, "The second verse of hymn 275 has been on my mind yesterday and today:

' Let me not murmur nor repine,  
Under these trying strokes of Thine,  
But while I walk the mournful road,  
Be still, and know that Thou art God.' "

Little did we think what this meant; the pathway became more trying, particularly the last two months. Yet most wonderfully she was kept much in the spirit of that word, "Be still." There was no murmuring, but a quiet peaceful mind.

Not long before the end, she raised both hands and said, "Kept by the power of God." Later her husband said to her,

" When this afflicted soul shall rise,  
To join the ransomed in the skies,  
Above the rest this note shall swell,  
My Jesus has done all things well."

A little later she feebly said, "Repeat," then, "Jesus." A few hours later she went unconscious and passed away quietly.

The funeral service at Providence Chapel, Cranbrook, was taken by Mr. S. Delves on August 27th. It was felt that no hymn was more suitable for the occasion than "Sovereign Ruler of the skies."

From particulars supplied by R.J.H.

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

MAY, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## FALLEN OUT TO THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL

*Sermon preached at Zoar Chapel, The Dicker, on September 23rd,  
1971*

**Text:** "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. i. 12).

This is a remarkable word. Things do not just happen: they *fall out* according to God's divine appointment, *fall out* to the honour and glory of God, *fall out* to the benefit of His people. Paul, amid all the strange things that happened, is blessed with a gracious understanding that these are not just things that are happening, but they are *falling out* by divine appointment. And it will be a wonderful thing this afternoon if any are given the same blessed view by faith to see how all things in our life *fall out*, not just happen. They are all by divine appointment.

Consider the word first of all as to our mercies. They *fall out* by divine appointment; they *fall out* of the hand of a gracious, bountiful God. Think for a moment of the harvest—another harvest safely gathered in. How the world takes it for granted! It is just something that happens, something that always has happened, something that always will happen. But the child of God see something different. Did you ever see the harvest *fall out* of the ancient promise made to Noah, "seed time and harvest"? Have you ever seen it *fall out* of the amazing mercy of God to all His creatures? May we ever be kept from taking these things for granted. May we be delivered from the spirit of the world that just regards it as something that always has happened, and always will happen. Our mercies *fall out* of the hand of God. "Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." So it is with all our mercies. O to be delivered from the spirit of the age, a carnal spirit, an unbelieving spirit! We are surrounded with mercies. Really the supply of all our needs is just as remarkable as Elijah's barrel of meal and cruse of oil. We are surrounded with mercies in our homes, in our families, in our life, in our circumstances, and in the church of God; and these mercies *fall out* of God's bountiful hand. May we be blessed with grace to understand it.

If it is so with our temporal mercies, how much more so with the exceeding riches of His grace! If the Lord opens His hand and satisfies the needs of every living thing, if He opens His hand to all His creatures, He opens His *heart* to His beloved people. The

mercies in grace that surround the people of God have *fallen out* of the everlasting covenant. They were treasured up in Christ from all eternity. They supply the needs of all the people of God to the end of time by divine appointment. One by one these new covenant blessings *fall out* freely like the rain from heaven upon the thirsty ground. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass."

"Yes, dearest Lord, 'tis my desire  
Thy wise appointments to admire;  
And trace the footsteps of my God,  
Through every path in Zion's road."

The time when the Lord first placed divine life in your heart *fell out* by divine eternal covenant appointment.

"His decree that formed the earth  
Fixed my first and second birth."

The time when you first felt your need, first trembled concerning eternity, your first solemn thoughts of the judgment day, the first feeling that you were unprepared to die; all *fell out* by divine appointment. Then the time of your deliverance. Some here can look back to the time of your espousals to Christ, the kindness of your youth when you went after Him in the wilderness; the time of love when He drew near to you and said, "Live"; the time when His love was shed abroad in your heart, when the prisoner found liberty, when you were blessed with faith's view of Jesus, when your hope was cast as an anchor within the veil. These things are divinely appointed, and they all *fall out* according to the Lord's gracious purposes to you. Now you can understand, "According to the riches of His grace." All new covenant blessings you have had in your life have been bestowed upon you: "Every good and every perfect gift is from above (this is where they fall out!) and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "The things which have happened unto me have *fallen out*"—all His mercies, temporal and spiritual.

But the apostle here speaks on a rather different theme. He speaks of the strange things, the hard things, the mysterious things, the trying things that had happened unto him, and he says, *These* have fallen out. So even they are divinely appointed. And he says, further than this, they have fallen out *for good*, "fallen out for the furtherance of the gospel." I read to you 2 Corinthians xi this afternoon for this reason: Paul there gives a catalogue of the things that happened to him. O what a list it is: the sufferings, the trials, the ordeals that he endured! Let me remind you again, friends, of some of these things. We read, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils

in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." These are some of the things that happened to Paul. O what a list! And yet Paul through mercy could look back and see that all things had fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel. You might say, "Whatever good could come out of all those things?" And perhaps you would say, "Why did the Lord permit this to such a faithful servant?" But Paul was blessed with faith to look beyond all this to see an all-wise purpose in it. It was *for the furtherance of the gospel*.

Now he was imprisoned in Rome. That seemed a mysterious thing; Paul was so favoured, so useful, and now he is in prison in Rome! He wrote to his beloved Philippians here very clearly that it was by divine appointment. How often he speaks of himself as "the prisoner of the Lord"! He did not want the Philippians to think this was all a mistake, a failure. He wanted them to know it was rather *for the furtherance of the gospel*.

In two special ways I believe this was so. First, there were a few whose names were eternally recorded in the book of life who lived in Rome. They had never heard the gospel. They were still in the ruins of the fall. Some were in Caesar's household. But it was the Lord's eternal purpose that they should be vessels of mercy. So there were all these mysterious dealings with Paul—the trials, the shipwreck, and so he was brought to Rome. You might say, "Whatever good can come out of this?" There are a few vessels of mercy in Rome to whom the preaching of Paul is to be made the savour of life unto life. These things fell out "to the furtherance of the gospel." It seemed at first it was a trial to the early churches, but in the mind of God there was a purpose of love and mercy to those He would call by grace. Second, the blessed epistles Paul wrote when he was in Rome to the churches. So it was not only for the furtherance of the gospel in the churches in those days, but in the church of God in all ages down to the end of time. "The things that happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

Now I want to trace out this remarkable subject; the strange things, the mysterious things, the hard things that come in your life—they do not come by chance or accident. Afflictions come not forth of the dust (Job v. 6.); they come out from the hand of God, and may we see they fall out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. Paul put this "rather" in it. There seems an emphasis on it! "*Rather.*" As Joseph said, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." See what came out of all Joseph's trials. It seemed everything was going wrong, but everything was going right. "The things that happened unto me have fallen out *rather* unto the furtherance of the gospel." Whatever good could come out of all Joseph's trials? But it fell out of the hand of God. How much often hangs on so little! You look at Joseph as his

father sends him to find his brethren. He cannot find them. He is about to go back home but a man finds him wandering there. It seems remarkable that this very man overheard a casual word about them going to Dothan. Such a casual happening that he should tell Joseph. It was something that fell out. Apart from that, Joseph would have soon been back home to Jacob, but because of this he goes to Dothan. This was the beginning of Joseph's troubles. Then afterwards his exaltation. There is a "rather" in it. Joseph said, "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." This is the "rather." John Kent in one of his hymns says,

"Great is the mystery, truly great,  
That hell's designs should hell defeat;  
But here eternal wisdom shines,  
For Satan works what God designs."

There is a "rather" here.

We see it especially in the cross of Christ. He was taken "by wicked hands," says Peter, but He was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." These things happened to the blessed Lamb of God. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." The suffering He endured, the cruel treatment He had at their hands, the crown of thorns, the nails, the spear—they happened according to the foreknowledge of God. Was it not for the furtherance of the gospel? Apart from it there would be no gospel. The cross of Christ is the glory and foundation of the gospel.

There is a "rather" which the apostle puts here—the mystery of the Lord's dealings in providence and grace for the good of His people. They fall out *rather* for the furtherance of the gospel.

You beloved servants of the Lord, I am sure you find some strange things come in your lot. Perhaps you come into such strange spots and places, you hardly know how to stand up in a pulpit, and it is in fear and trembling you have to speak you hardly know how, but it exactly suits someone in the congregation. It is painful to you, but it has fallen out *rather* for the furtherance of the gospel. Now sometimes we can feel we are willing to endure such things if so be it is for the good of the people of God. There is a fearing, perplexing state we often get into when in the pulpit, and when we are like that, the people of God seem to profit most. We cannot understand it, but, "The things that happened unto me have fallen out *rather* to the furtherance of the gospel." We do not understand some of the mysterious leadings of the Lord with His servants. There is a constraint laid upon one of His servants, and sometimes a restraint; a door opened, a door closed. "His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known." And we say, "Lord, why is this?" It has rather fallen out for the furtherance of the gospel.

I was thinking in travelling here today of a little account I read some years ago. A minister was travelling by train and missed his connection. He had to wait two or three hours for the next train. It was laid upon him to beg that those two or three hours might not be spent in vain. He went for a walk and sat upon a seat where there was an old man groaning in distress. The minister tried to speak to him kindly, but got no response. In the end the poor man said, "There is only one person can help me, the one who helped me in the war." And he mentioned the name of the very minister who had missed his train!

"The things that have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." Now friends, it is not just concerning ministers. There is another way in which the furtherance of the gospel can be considered: the furtherance of the gospel *in the souls of the people of God*. There are things happen to us, and when sanctified to us, it is for the furtherance of the gospel in our souls. Sometimes we trust the gospel has entered our hearts, but we feel it has not gone very far. There is so little we know, so much we long to know. But the Lord often uses the things that fall out to us to lead us more deeply, more sweetly into the truth. We are brought closer into union and communion with Christ, to feel more of His love, His mercy, and His glorious person, and of the reason for the trial. Cannot some of you look back to some solemn things that have fallen out in your life? They were real trials, but as you look back you can see it was rather for the furtherance of the gospel.

"It is the Lord, whose matchless skill  
Can from afflictions raise  
Matter eternity to fill  
With ever growing praise."

Some of you may have some strange things happening to you at present. Maybe you received a letter this morning, and it almost prostrated you—a disappointment, a great trial. There may be some great trial you are walking in, but may you prove these things are *falling out*, and may you prove it is rather to the furtherance of the gospel. O for grace to pray, not to get out of the trial, but that it might be made profitable for the furtherance of the gospel!

It may be some of you are in things at present that are so perplexing, so mysterious. You cannot understand them, you cannot see any point or purpose in them. Perhaps you say, "Why is it, Lord?" And well it may be that these things will fall out, these things which happen to you, for the furtherance of the gospel. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

I have sometimes thought of Moses, forty lonely years in the backside of the desert. It was a strange path that fell out to Moses. At forty he believed it was the time for God's appointed

deliverance. He was ready to go to lead the people to the promised land. But he had to flee to Midian, and there he was looking after sheep in the backside of the desert! Surely there is a mistake here? No, all was right. Nothing was wrong. God is never in a hurry. He was waiting to accomplish His purpose to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. But what of those years, the trial to Moses? We read very little concerning the things that happened to him, that fell out. He named his firstborn Gershom, which means, "I have been a stranger in a strange land." He could not understand it. His second son was Eliezer: "The God of my fathers, said he, was my help." Then in Hebrews we read, "He endured." There was much for Moses to endure in the things that happened, that fell out—"He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." I believe Moses could look back (not at the time but afterwards) and see the wisdom of God in those forty years in the wilderness.

"The things that happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel." The afflictions that you are in fall out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. How can it be? The disappointments, the hard things, the troubles—can God overrule? Then the things in your families, in your relation to others; the unknown way before you; you have been misunderstood perhaps; but it has been for the furtherance of the gospel. The trouble in your life, the path that lies before you, the things you have got to pass through, the things in your business, can it be they fall out rather to the furtherance of the gospel? God makes no mistakes.

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform."

It is not mysterious to God, but it is mysterious to us.

I often think of John chapter vi, the feeding of the five thousand. The disciples were considering what might happen, what might not happen. There is a little word: "He Himself knew what He would do." May it be a word in season to you. These things that have happened to you, these things that have fallen out, take you by surprise. They do not take the Lord by surprise. They fall out to the furtherance of the gospel. Jesus Himself knew what He would do. You and I do not know what to do. Jehoshaphat's prayer is often prayed by the family of grace: "Neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee." He well knows the way which we take. He knows what He will do. He is the all wise God. But we cannot understand His goings, we cannot trace His thoughts. "His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters; His footsteps are not known." These things fall out, not to destroy, but for your good. The words are often quoted, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." They work *together* for good—the things that have happened unto you;

things which have fallen out work *together* for good. One almost kills you; together they work for good. I am told that some of the most precious medicines contain several ingredients. One by itself would kill you, but mixed together they are precious remedies. What do you see there? "All things work *together* for good to them that are called according to His purpose." *All things*: every trial, every loss, every cross. "They shall profit if not please."

"The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." And Paul prayed that they might *understand* it. I would that you might understand it, friends, and it is not always easy to understand; we are very slow in coming to an understanding. Paul had a blessed understanding. We sing,

"Now I see whate'er betide,  
All is well if Christ be mine."

It is a blessed understanding! Unbelief never understands it. God-given faith understands it. "I would that ye understood brethren, that the things that have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel." O to be blessed with this understanding! It does not come from nature; it is God's gift to understand in any measure His mysterious dealings. It is not to understand *what* the Lord is doing (it does not mean that!) but to understand *this*: that God is all-wise, He makes no mistake.

"What His wisdom sees most fit  
Must be surely best for me."

Do you understand, friends? Whenever that verse is sung, I think of a godly young woman who was dying. She knew she was dying of cancer, that she had not much longer to live. She often spoke of the words,

"Lord, I would indeed submit;  
Gladly yield my all to Thee;  
What Thy wisdom sees most fit,  
Must be surely best for me."

She said she wanted to say it, but could not. Once when I saw her at her end, she said, "I *can* sing it now, 'Gladly yield my all to Thee.'" She was brought to a blessed understanding through grace. "I would that ye understood, brethren." O to have an understanding heart! "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." Then this will be a thanksgiving service, not just for your outward mercies, providential mercies, but for all the Lord's dealings. "He hath done all things well." You will be able to thank Him for all those losses and crosses. O for grace to enter into the text: "But I would that ye should understand, brethren, that the things that have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel."

The Lord add His blessing.

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## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST

*From the 1843 "Zion's Trumpet." The author's name is not given.*

This subject is at all times interesting to the church of God, particularly those who have been taught the deep and dreadful depravity of human nature, and who are daily constrained to abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes. The apostle Peter was well qualified to preach and write upon this momentous subject, and he seems determined, with his brother Paul, to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, being fully persuaded that this was a sovereign remedy for the soul-destroying malady—SIN.

In attempting to enlarge upon this all-important doctrine, "the precious blood of Christ," we shall consider:

I. The dignity and value. II. The properties. III. The effects, of this most precious blood.

I. As there could be no remission of sin without satisfaction given to God, and as all the actions and endeavours of creatures are imperfect and sinful, no atonement could they make; and God required a perfect price to be paid, an unblemished sacrifice to be offered, satisfaction to be given, and complete reconciliation to be made. One, equal with God the Father, must be found, whose person and work must be of infinite merit; and, for the everlasting consolation of all seeking souls, we are told that God has found a ransom, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, a God to satisfy, a Man to suffer. And in Jesus we have a sufficiency of merit to give the holy law of God content and full satisfaction to His justice, and a holy harmony is seen among all the perfections of Deity, when viewed through the precious blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus. Many hope for pardon without payment, and venture their precious souls upon a God all mercy; but it is a daring presumption to separate the justice and mercy of God, for God could not be just if any of the debt due to Him remained unsatisfied. The dignity of the person of Christ, being infinite, put such a value in His blood that what He suffered in the short time of His agony and death saved the church with an everlasting salvation. Let us here pause and adore that Almighty Ransomer, who was made sin and a curse, who did all, who suffered all, and paid all for His people. O mighty and matchless mystery! God, clothed with flesh, becomes a man, that our nature might be taken up into fellowship with God. The Lamb upon the throne must be the great wonder of heaven. Before Him the redeemed bow, before Him the angels worship, and in Him all fulness dwells.

II. We will now glance at some of the properties of this precious blood.

1. *It is peace-making blood.* War against God was proclaimed in Eden's garden, and every new-born infant swells the number of enemies hostile to God; and although proclamations of peace are continually made by heaven's heralds, yet not one engaged in this war accept of peace until Christ the peacemaker makes willing by His grace and Spirit in the day of His power.

2. *It is redeeming blood.* This implies a state of slavery and bitter bondage, to require a power and a price so infinite. Here the preciousness of this blood is to be seen, by the liberty obtained and the freedom enjoyed; not one for whom this price was paid shall be detained a prisoner.

3. *It is cleansing or purifying blood.* We read of some who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Do we not read of a people without spot, who are all fair, and not a stain or wrinkle left? How and where can this mighty miracle be performed? The Scriptures point to an open fountain, to precious blood, and declare that it cleanses from all sin. Why did David sing, "I love the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications"? for his imperfect petitions would not have engaged the attention of a holy God, and have been so quickly replied to, had they not have passed through the King's royal bath, and mingled with the merits of Jehovah's darling Son. It is the intercession of heaven's High Priest that repels the charges, silences the accusations of Satan, and makes the services of saints an odour, and acceptable to God. It is probable that our own poor prayers would not be known by us, could we see them after they had been purified from all imperfection and passed through the holy air of heaven, the hands and heart of Jesus, the aid of God the Spirit, and the precious blood of Christ.

4. *It is preserving blood.* What preserved Noah and his charge so securely in the ark? It must be pitched within and without. Mark this! You must have both an outward and an inward covering; you must have the covering of Christ's spotless righteousness, the purple covering of His blood, and the inward garment of sanctification. What protected the children of Israel in Egypt when the destroying angel passed through with the weapon of death? The blood of the paschal Lamb, sprinkled visibly on the two door-posts and on the top or lintel, where this sacred sign was seen; into that marked dwelling he dare not enter, but passed on to the next post and, if not stained, he entered in and did the dreadful deed of death by smiting the first-born. How solemn will it be with all the human race who are not washed in this precious blood of Christ! No preservation from deserved punishment but under this safe shelter. The history of Rahab the harlot is truly interesting; she owed her safety to the true token of a scarlet cord. She must have shared in the general destruction of Jericho had she omitted fastening the red thread in the window.

If she changed the colour of the cord, the solemn bond entered into by the spies would have been no longer binding upon them. But we meet with many who will substitute a form of godliness for the power, their own sincere obedience for the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a something they intend to do for what the Son of God has done.

5. *It is pardoning blood.* A blessing long sought after by some, and in mercy found at last. Nathan the seer told his sovereign, David, that the Lord had put away his sin but the sad effects should be seen and felt; and this royal favour could only be bestowed through the precious blood of Christ, for without shedding of blood there could be no remission. Prophets and apostles all agree upon this subject, in preaching peace by Jesus Christ, and all that God the Holy Spirit teaches to pray for pardon seek it through a Saviour's merits. This is a mercy suitable to our wilderness situation—carrying about a body all corrupt—a proneness to wander from God—enemies, within and without, many and mighty—ourselves perfect weakness—that we find at the close of every day and every duty, we need the pardoning love of Him whose Spirit we grieve, whose laws we often break, whose favour we never merit, and whose wrath we at all times deserve.

III. Many blessed effects follow the reception of these holy truths, such as loving to hear them set forth in the public ministry of the word. That must be a most wretched service, and a poor empty sermon, if the all over glorious person, Emmanuel, the heaven-admitting robe and precious blood of Christ, are omitted. There will be a cordial love to Him who shed His blood to redeem and make peace for His people, a holy trusting in His great work of salvation, and a pleading this atonement whenever the knee is bowed in prayer to God. This makes the conscience clean and tender, and produces life and liberty in the soul; it causes the saints to sing,

“ Faith in the bleeding Lamb,  
O what a gift is this!  
Hope of salvation in His Name,  
How comfortable 'tis.”

But when we are going to the table of the Lord to commemorate the wonderful love and most precious blood-shedding of Jesus, we cannot have a more suitable subject than the one your attention has been called unto; and, to furnish us with matter for meditation, we will further observe that a short period before Christ expired upon the cross, and while having the full weight of the curse of God upon Him that was due to all those sins that were laid upon Him, and while suffering the intolerable torture of His Father's wrath, with His lovely face and features all marred, He lifts up a prayer for His malicious enemies, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” and looks with love and listens to the praying thief, and cheers his heart with, “ Today

shalt thou be with Me in paradise." But surely there never was sorrow like unto the sorrow felt by the Son of God at this time, for the incomprehensible weight of His Father's rod did fall heavy upon the church's Surety at this time, and all sensible consolation was for a season withheld from Him. But it was necessary that the Mediator should for a time be deserted of all sensible comfort, and should taste of all that dreadful bitterness accompanying such a desertion, so that He might bear the whole punishment due to the sins of His bride, and feel the sad effects of divine vengeance in so high a degree and measure as must be equivalent to the punishment we justly merited and fully satisfactory to the justice of God for all our transgressions. O ye children of the most high God, who are here met on this solemn occasion, look at the curse and wrath of God pouring down on the humanity of Jesus; look at the hand of heaven with the uplifted rod, striking the Surety without mitigation or mercy; look at stern Justice with her sharp-pointed sword, and the frightful prison of hell beneath, with all the intolerable agony and anguish of soul that Jesus felt, and all this must have been your everlasting portion. Here let me ask you if this must not have been precious blood to avert so dreadful a storm—to satisfy justice so inflexible—to answer claims so enormous—to reconcile parties so opposite—to atone for such crimson crimes? and this precious blood is of such infinite efficacy that not one sin of the redeemed of the Lord is left unatoned for, nor one debt unpaid. It cleanses the guilty conscience from all sin, and has removed the iniquity of the land in one day.

"Saints! raise your expectations high,  
 Hope all that heaven has good,  
 The blood of Christ has made you nigh,  
 Invaluable blood!"

This subject is of such moment that the great Head of the church has instituted two ordinances to raise it up in the remembrance of the church of God—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are set forth by the former, and the agony, pain, and passion of the same divine Person by the latter, and if forms a part of the music and melody of heaven. "To Him that has washed us from our sins in His own blood," the ransomed of the Lord are now singing in glory. And will not the merits of the Mediator be remembered to all eternity? For all owe their salvation and standing before the throne in the holy and happy presence of God to the rich blood and spotless righteousness of Him who endured such tormenting sufferings in Gethsemane and upon Calvary, the symbols of whose body and blood are now before us. Christ died that His people might live. His precious blood was shed to procure the pardon and effect the purity of all His people, His heart's blood must be shed to give law and justice content, and now this sacrifice ascends

in all its virtue and enters heaven, and makes the cries and confessions of the children of God acceptable.

“ And since my Saviour stands between,  
 In garments dyed in blood,  
 'Tis He, instead of me, is seen  
 When I approach to God.”

Here, then, sinking soul, who in thy own apprehension art standing upon the borders of the pit, here is a remedy to restore and effectually to heal thee of every wound, as the Word of the Lord and many millions of blood-washed saints can testify. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, testify of Jesus and His most precious blood to those who may read this, and the glory shall be given to the Father, Son, and Spirit. Amen.

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### LETTER BY JOHN TURTON

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Dear Friend—Your letter to me was so very welcome and so very seasonable—“ a word in season, how good it is!” None know the goodness of a seasonable word but those to whom it is spoken seasonably.

I have often thought, I trust prayerfully, about you since you left our circle and moved down there. I felt often encouraged when speaking to know there were a few sound, really taught, discriminating hearers who know chaff from wheat, bread from a stone, and fish from a scorpion. Such I believe the Lord has made you. He has done it. But you know, dear friend, He has not finished His work yet. He will not leave thee until He has performed all His purpose towards thee. Thou wilt have many a stroke, as well as many a kiss. As John Kent says:

“ A kiss, or a stroke of His rod,  
 Are all in immutable love.”

You say in yours that often you “ cannot see your signs.” 'Twould be singular if you always could. But tell me, if when these dark seasons come on and the beasts of the forest creep forth out of their dens; when sin prevails and gloomy fear—tell me what conclusion you come to respecting your self, weakness, suspicions, lest things might after all be wrong, whether you have mistaken the way or you are out of the secret. Relief? Would you not get it if you could. Prayer? Not a breath of prayer. Ah, come now, what about those anxious longings to be free, to know afresh the virtue of that blood, that love, that sweet witness of the Spirit which is the earnest of immortal joy and rest and peace? I believe those sighs are the reachings forth of the soul which can and do even overcome Omnipotence, and, like Jacob, say, “ I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” I am persuaded better things of such characters, much better things of them than of those who say they can always pray, always find the Lord; all they

have to do is to call and He answers right away. If they are really correct, then surely you and I have missed the way. But when I look into the Word, I cannot find anything there which verifies that class of experience; and I am certain the dear Redeemer never found such to be so friendly towards Him when here below.

In regard to myself, I thank you for your kind wishes and enquiry. Since October, 1937, I have been so dealt with as to make it impossible for me to continue at my work. First I had a severe attack of influenza and bronchial pneumonia from which, through mercy, I recovered. And I must say, though it was a severe chastisement (I know what it was for), yet the grace of the Lord was exceeding abundant. He broke my heart with a discovery of His love just when I thought I was going to die and go to hell. Such a wretch I felt to be! He came into my soul with power, unction, love reclaimed the wretched wanderer, sealed pardon, brought peace, healed backslidings, restored to health. Afterwards, on being examined by a specialist after consultation, I found it advisable to go into a Nursing Home for a major operation. This caused many a cry, much anxiety, many questionings; but the Lord brought me safely through and I believe has caused the operation to be of benefit. But you know, dear friend, I feel to be no wiser. I'm like the fool in Proverbs, brayed in a mortar with a pestle, yet still as foolish. Ephraim was a silly dove without heart; I am not a whit better!

Now I must not trouble you further, only to thank you for your kind remembrance of me, and beseech you to kindly think of me in your prayers.

Sincerely I am yours in gospel bonds,

Warrington, 19th December, 1937.

J. Turton

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## RECEIVING JESUS AS LORD

*From a discourse by Ralph Erskine (1685-1752)*

Have you received Jesus as Lord? Then walk in Him as a Lord, otherwise you walk not in Him as you received Him. The true believer doth not only receive Christ as Jesus and Saviour, but also as Lord and Governor. Many would divide between His salvation and His dominion. They would have Christ as a Saviour to save them from wrath but not as a Lord to destroy their lusts and sins. But the true receiver of Christ is as weary of the load of sin and corruption as he is weary of the load of condemnation; and therefore not only being weary of condemnation would he have Christ as Saviour, but being weary of corruption he would have Christ as Lord. And indeed, when the heart would have water as well as blood, then it is in a right temperature. When

the man would have water to purify the heart as well as blood to pacify the conscience, this argues honest receiving. For Christ comes by water and blood (1 John v. 6). He comes not only to justify, but also to sanctify; He comes not only as Jesus to save by price, but also as Lord to save by power.

Now have you received Christ in the capacity of Lord? Then so walk in Him as He is a Lord and as ye have received Him. The rest of the world give evidence that they never received Him as Lord by their practically saying that they will not have this Man to reign over them. But know, man, that He will never be a Jesus to save you if He be not also a Lord to conquer you and reign over you. You can never receive Him as Jesus and reject Him as Lord without being rejected of Him in both these capacities; for He will not be a Jesus where He is not a Lord.

But you, believers, who have received Christ as Lord, are you walking in Him as these that have thus received Him, and giving evidence that ye have received Him as Lord before God and the world? Surely if it be so, it will some way appear by the language of your hearts and the language of your lives. The language of your hearts will be, "O Lord, other lords have had dominion over me; but now by Thee only will I make mention of Thy Name. O, may Christ be the *Lord of my heart*, and of all the thoughts of my heart, so as they may be captives to the Son of God; and of all the affections of my heart, so as they may terminate upon Him alone; and of all the desires of my heart, so as that they may go out after Him." Why, the rest of the world show they never received Him as Lord, because the devil, the world and the flesh have the whole of their hearts, their thoughts, affections and desires, being wholly taken up with vanishing worldly lusts, idols and trifles. But though the world may have much of a believer's heart sometimes, yet it hath but the white of the egg, as it were; Christ hath the yolk of the heart of that man—his top and superlative thoughts and desires, because he hath taken Christ for the Lord of his heart.

Again, if you have received Christ as Lord, then you will so desire to walk in Him by saying, "O, let Him be the *Lord of my tongue*," while others are saying, "Our tongues are our own; who is Lord over us?" and so loosing their tongues against heaven by cursing, swearing, railing, reproaching. But says the man that hath received Christ the Lord, "May Christ be the Lord of my tongue, and may it be occupied in His service, in praying, praising, and edifying discourse upon all occasions, Sabbath and working days." Many by their carnal discourse and conversation, and by their evil and unprofitable communication, give evidence that it is not Christ but the devil that is lord of their tongues.

Again, if you have received Christ as Lord, then you will so desire to walk in Him as to make Him *Lord of your time* so as not to squander it away with idle company, idle visits, idle diversions,

as if it were good for nothing but to be cast away upon any trifle. But you will endeavour to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time." Many show that Christ is not their Lord by living as if they were lords of their own time and talents, which yet are but lent of the Lord who says, "Occupy till I come."

If you have received Him as Lord, then so to walk in Him is to make Him *Lord of your life* so as to live to Him, the Lord of your souls and bodies so as to glorify Him in your souls and bodies, which are His. Others live as if they were lords of their own lives, lords of their own souls, and might cast them away at random; and lords of their own bodies and might defile them with drunkenness and whoredom as they please—an evidence that Christ is not their Lord.

If you have received Him as Lord, then so to walk in Him is to make Him *Lord of your consciences* and the Lord of your light so as not to enslave your light and conscience to any man upon earth, any devil in hell, or any idol in the world. Many give evidence that Christ is not their Lord by crossing their light and consciences for a trifle. Whereas if Christ were the Lord of their light and conscience, they would die in His cause rather than put out His candle which He hath kindled in their breast.

Again, if you have received Christ as Lord, you will so walk in Him as to make Him the *Lord of your wills*, He having made you willing in the day of His power. Whatever remaining enmity or rebellion of will takes place, yet your habitual desire will be to have your will in subjection to His will, whether preceptive or providential, without fighting against His precept or fretting against His providence. At least, every fighting and fretting thought will be a matter of exercise to you, while your soul's desire will be to have a due subjection to His precept and submission to His providence. The rest of the world give evidence that Christ is not their Lord because they are such as carry on as if they were lords of their own wills; their wills were never subdued.

Again, if Christ be received as Lord, you will so walk in Him as to make Him *Lord of your comforts and enjoyments* so as to bless Him when He gives and takes, saying, "It is the Lord that giveth, the Lord that taketh; blessed be the Name of the Lord." Take worldly comforts away from a man that never took Christ for his Lord, he will cry, "O ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" But the believer will say, even with respect to spiritual as well as outward comforts, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good to Him." If He Himself be my Lord, let Him dispose of me and mine as He will.

If you have received Christ as your Lord, then so walk in Him as to make Him *Lord of your graces*, who gives grace and the exercise of it as He pleases. And so your desire will be to be strong, not in yourself or your own grace, but strong in the grace that is in Christ, saying if you want any grace in exercise, "O, He is the

Prince exalted by the right hand of God to give it and therefore to Him will I look for it"; or if you have any grace, "O, it is not of me; it is by grace I am what I am."

You will own Him also as *Lord of your duties* and the Lord of ordinances that only can put a blessing in them for your good, and as the Lord your righteousness in whom alone you can have acceptance, and the Lord your strength from whom alone you can have assistance. They that perform all their duties in their natural strength, and so think to have acceptance of God and favour with Him upon their doing so, they both put themselves in the room of the Lord our strength, and their duties in the room of the Lord our righteousness.

In a word, if you have received Christ as Lord, you will walk in Him by making Him the *Lord of your faith*. The false apostles made Moses the lord of their faith and obedience equal with Christ, and therefore they joined the Mosaical ceremonies with the doctrine of Christ; but the Colossians had received Christ Jesus the Lord, and so they are called to walk in Him as they had received Him. Some make the church lord of their faith. They believe as the church believes, or as this or that man believes, which shows that Christ is not their Lord. Some make the devil the lord of their faith. They believe the devil rather than the God of truth, and the devil, the father of lies, teaches them to believe a lie. Some make their reason the lord of their faith. They believe no more than their carnal reason can digest. But the true believer makes Christ the Lord of his faith, the veracity of Christ the ground of it, and the doctrine of Christ the rule of it. To walk in Christ as ye have received Him for Lord is to make Him the Lord of your faith in spite of the devil and the world.

Finally, if you have received Him as your Lord, you will so walk in Him as to make Him the *Lord of your obedience*. Others by obeying the devil, by obeying their lusts and idols, and by obeying the sinful commandments of men, show that Christ is not the Lord of their obedience. But, believer, if you walk in Christ as you have received Him, you give evidence that He is the Lord whom you obey and serve, saying with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And then let it be the language of your life and conversation before the world—that Christ is your Lord. If you would judge of yourselves that Christ is your Lord, it is even to be tried by your subjection to Him, and His subduing sin in you. The higher the Sun of Righteousness is risen, the shorter will the shadows of your sin and corruption be. If the world judge of your receiving of Christ as Lord, and of your faith, they will judge it by your walk and conversation and by your works.

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Saving faith, though it be the sweetest and easiest thing in the world under the conduct of divine grace and the drawings of the divine Spirit, yet without that, it is the hardest thing in the world.

R. Erskine

## FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

*From the writings of Robert Leighton (1611-1684)*

This is reason enough why Christians are called to a suffering life, seeing the Lord and Author of that calling suffered Himself so much. The Captain, or Leader, of our salvation, as the apostle speaks, was made perfect through sufferings. That was the way by which He entered into the holy place, where He is now our everlasting High Priest, making intercession for us. If He be our Leader to salvation, must not we follow Him in the way He leads, whatsoever it is? If it be (as we see it) by the way of sufferings, we must either follow on in that way or fall short of salvation, for there is no other leader, nor any other way than that which He opened. So that there is not only a congruity in it, that His followers be conformed to Him in suffering, but a necessity, if they will follow Him till they attain to glory. And a consideration of both these cannot but argue a Christian into a resolution for this royal way of suffering that leads to glory, through which their Lord and King Himself went to His glory. It could hardly be believed at first that this was *His* way, and we can as hardly yet believe that it must be ours. "O fools and slow of heart to believe! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Will you be in glory, and will you not follow your Leader in the only way to it? Must there be another way cut out for you for yourself? O absurd! Shall the servant be greater than his Lord? Are not you fairly dealt with? If you have a mind to Christ, you shall have as much of the world's goodwill as He had. If it hate you, He bids you remember how it hated Him.

But though there were a way to do otherwise, would you not, if the love of Christ possessed your hearts, rather choose to share with Him in His lot and find delight in the very trouble of it? Is not this conformity to Jesus the great ambition of all His true-hearted followers? "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," says the great apostle. Besides the unspeakable advantage to come, which goes linked with this, that if we suffer we shall also reign with Him, there is a glory even in the present resemblance, that we are conformed to the image of the Son of God in sufferings. Why should we desire to leave Him? Are you not one with Him? Can you choose but have the same common friends and enemies? Would you willingly, if it might be, could you find in your heart to be friends with that world which hated your Lord and Master? Would you have nothing but kindness and ease where He had nothing but enmity and trouble? Or would you not rather, when you think aright of it, disdain and refuse to be so unlike Him? As that good Duke said when they would have crowned him King of Jerusalem: "No," said he, by no means. I will not wear a crown of gold where Jesus was crowned with thorns."

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## THE CENTENARY OF THE GOSPEL STANDARD AID SOCIETY

It has been recorded of the first editor of the *Gospel Standard*, William Gadsby, that, "Benevolence was his element. He felt that it was more blessed to give than to receive, and he acted up to what he felt." The evening that he died, a poor Irish woman testified, "He once kept me from starving when my own priest wouldn't give me a farthing."

This spirit seems to have prevailed among the ministers connected with the *Gospel Standard* in its early days. However, just a hundred years ago, a few of the friends became concerned that something in the way of *regular* help should be given to aged and infirm ministers, and to ministers' widows. The first step seems to have been when Joseph Hatton, minister at Smallfields and Redhill, wrote to William Gadsby's son, John, enquiring if something positive could be done. Mr. Hatton's letter read :

"It has been suggested to me that at present the widows of deceased ministers are so unequally provided for, it would be a good thing to raise a general fund and invest it, and grant allowances therefrom . . . Now, my dear friend, will you aid, or, I mean rather, will you take the lead in this thing? I do not know anyone who could better set it going and keep it so."

John Gadsby's delight in organising being equalled by his generosity, he gladly lent his support. Further encouragement was given by the beloved Francis Covell of Croydon with the result that a meeting was arranged for 11 o'clock on 17th May, 1872, at the Lecture Hall of the Sunday School Union, 56 Old Bailey. 64 persons were present and a committee of 25 was set up. Eleven committee meetings were held during the first year, another General Meeting held at which the Articles and Rules were introduced, and the Committee was increased to 34 members. At the end of the year it was reported that grants amounting to £75 7s. had been made. (During the centenary year, Aid Society grants were £3,354).

Thus the Gospel Standard Aid Society was begun. We believe the words spoken by Mr. Calcott of Coventry at the 50th Anniversary of the Aid Society are still true. Including in his remarks the Poor Relief Society (founded 1878), he said :

"One cannot but believe that the founders of them were moved by the Lord to lay their foundations. Their growth has been steady, but strong; their branches have spread themselves more or less over the whole denomination; their fruit has been always seasonable and copious. It reaches to the valleys where many poor widows spend lonely hours; it enters the sick room where the infirm and afflicted lie lingering out their few last days on earth; it comes as a refreshing breath to the aged, who are bowed beneath a weight of years. Many praises and much gratitude have ascended to the Lord for the providential springs that have flowed from these two Societies."

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### OPENING OF THE NEW BETHESDA HOME AT HOVE

The new Bethesda Home at 5 Hove Park Gardens, Hove, was opened on Saturday, 18th March, 1972.

A large number of friends gathered at the Home for the morning Prayer Meeting which was conducted from the dining-room by Mr. J. Delves and relayed to all parts of the Home. After the singing of Hymn 1, Mr. Delves read Psalm 116 and gave a brief address, outlining some of the remarkable providences of God in leading the Committee to build the new Home. Quoting the latter part of Exodus xx. 24, he referred to the daily readings in the Home and said that the Bethesda Homes were among the "all places" where the Lord records His Name. He spoke of the dying testimony of the late Mr. Sydney Rolph who had died in the Home two days previously and of the felt presence of the Lord in the

Home on other occasions. He then called on the following friends to pray: Mr. J. T. Pollington (Rotherfield), Mr. J. A. Watts (Luton), Mr. D. Lewis (Brighton). Hymn 139 was sung, followed by prayer by Mr. J. Crowter (Coventry), Mr. A. J. Ruskell (Liverpool) and Mr. A. T. Hatton (Redhill). The chairman then read Psalm 133 and after calling on Mr. S. Collins (Clapham) and Mr. B. J. Lockey (Westoning), the meeting was closed with Hymn 500.

In the afternoon, the Home was re-opened for viewing and refreshments were served during this period. Most of the residents were able to receive visitors and as the weather was warm and sunny, it was possible to walk and sit in the gardens; this helped to relieve congestion in the Home itself. It was estimated that several hundred people viewed the Home and a most pleasing atmosphere prevailed throughout the whole day. Much appreciation was expressed of the amenities provided for the residents and staff. A six page leaflet describing the Home was available for free distribution and a few copies are still available from the Matron of the Home.

In the evening, a preaching service was held at Galeed Chapel, Brighton. The chapel was filled and Mr. F. L. Gosden spoke from Romans viii. 31 : "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" A collection was taken after the service amounting to £569, to which several sums have since been added. We desire humbly to acknowledge the Lord's goodness to us on this memorable occasion and we also thank our friends for their liberality in supporting the Brighton Building Fund so generously. J.A.W.

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## THE DEITY OF CHRIST

*By John Gill (1697-1771)*

[During the past year, there have been increasing attempts by the powers of darkness to dishonour the Person of the Lord Jesus. Not only has His worthy Name been blasphemed in stage productions, but His essential Deity has been denied by a leading Baptist minister addressing the Baptist Assembly. Though the Baptist Union itself affirms the Deity of Christ, it has failed to take any disciplinary action, but rather defended the right of a minister to teach the opposite and still remain in the denomination.

The following article by the learned Dr Gill is a very clear and simple exposition of the teaching of the Word of God on this subject, so vital in its importance.

"So guilty, so helpless am I,  
I durst not confide in His blood,  
Nor on His protection rely,  
Unless I were sure He is God."]

The Deity of Christ may be next considered and proved; or that He is a divine Person, truly and properly God: not a made or created God, as say the Arians. He was made flesh, and made of a woman, but not made God; for then He must make Himself, which is absurd, since "without Him was not any thing made that was made," but "all things were made by Him" (John i. 3). Nor God by office, as say the Socinians, for then He would be God only in an improper sense, as magistrates are called gods, and not truly and properly God. Nor God by name only, as there are

called lords many, and gods many. Such were the gods of the heathens, inanimate, irrational, lifeless beings and so could have no divinity in them. But He is God by nature, as these were not, having the whole essence and nature of God in Him. This will appear:

I. *From the names which are given to Him:*

1. *He has the same glorious names the most High God has, as I AM that I AM (Exod. iii. 14), to which our Lord refers and takes to Himself (John viii. 58). And Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature and peculiar to the Most High (Psa. lxxxiii. 18).*

(i) Now we are told that God spake to Moses and said, "I am the Lord," or Jehovah, by which name He was not known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; that is, not by that only, or that was not so fully made known to them as it had been to Moses and to the Israelites by him (Exod. vi. 2, 3; iii. 14), which Person that appeared to Moses, and said those words, is called the Angel of the Lord (Exod. iii. 2), not a created angel (ver. 6) but an uncreated one, and must be understood, not of God the Father, who is never called an angel, but of the Son of God, the Angel of His presence who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, went before them and led them through the Red Sea and wilderness to the land of Canaan (Exod. iii. 8; xiii. 21; xiv. 19; xxiii. 20; Isa. lxiii. 9).

(ii) He whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness is expressly called Jehovah (Exod. xvii. 7), and nothing is more evident than that this Person was Christ (1 Cor. x. 9).

(ii.) He whom Isaiah saw on a throne, making a very magnificent appearance, is not only called *Adonai* (Isa. vi. 1) but by the seraphim, Jehovah (ver. 3); and so by Isaiah (ver. 5), who was bid to say to the Jews (ver. 8, 9): "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not," which words Christ applies to Himself, and observes that "those things Esaias said, when he saw His glory and spoke of Him." (John xii. 39, 40, 41).

(iv) There is a prophecy in Isa. xl. 3: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (or of Jehovah), "make straight in the desert a highway for our God," which, by the evangelist Matthew is applied unto, and interpreted of, John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 1, 2, 3). Wherefore, the Jehovah, whose way he was to prepare, and our God, whose paths he was to make straight, could be no other than Christ, whose harbinger and forerunner John was, and whose way and paths were prepared and made straight by him, through his preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, and declaring the kingdom of heaven, or of the Messiah, was at hand.

(v) Moreover, the Messiah, or Christ, is expressly called the

Lord, or Jehovah our righteousness (Jer. xxiii. 6), it being His work as Mediator to bring in everlasting righteousness, and He is the end of the law for it, and is made righteousness to every one that believes.

(vi) Once more, Jehovah promises to pour forth the Spirit of grace and supplication on some persons described in Zech. xii. 10, and then adds: "They shall look upon Me" (Jehovah) "whom they have pierced," which was fulfilled in Christ when one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side (John xix. 34, 37). The same words are referred to and applied to Christ (Rev. i. 7). Now, since in these and in many other places Christ is intended by Jehovah, He must be truly and properly God, since this name is incommunicable to any other.

2. It may be observed also that in some places of Scripture, *Christ is absolutely called God.*

(i) As in Psa. xlv. 6: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," where He is distinguished from God His Father (ver. 7). And the words are expressly applied to Him as the Son of God (Heb. i. 8): "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom."

(ii) Yea, Christ calls Himself God, as He well might since He is in the form of God and therefore thought it not robbery to be equal to Him, saying, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. xlv. 22, 23), which last words, in connection with the other, are by the apostle Paul applied to Christ (Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12).

(iii) The evangelist John says of the Word, or Son of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among men, and so cannot be understood of any but Christ, that "the Word was God." (John i. 1, 14).

(iv) The same inspired writer observes, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us" (1 John iii. 16). From whence it follows that He that laid down His life for men—which can only be said of Christ—and wherein His love to them appeared, must be God.

3. *And Christ is not only called God absolutely, but with some additional epithets, with possessive pronouns, as:*

(i) "*Our God*" the Jews were waiting for and John was the forerunner of (Isa. xxv. 9; xl. 3). "*Your God*" who should come when miracles would be wrought as proofs of it (Isa. xxxv. 4, 5). "*Their God*" (Luke i. 16). "*My Lord and my God*" by Thomas (John xx. 28). Now though angels, magistrates and judges are called gods in an improper and metaphorical sense, yet never called *our gods, your gods, etc.*

(ii) Christ is said to be Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, that is, God manifest in the flesh (Matt. i. 23, 1 Tim. iii. 16).

(iii) Some additional characters are given of Christ when He is called God, which shew Him to be truly and properly God; as "the mighty God" (Isa. ix. 6.) which is manifestly a prophecy of Him, and who elsewhere is called the most Mighty, yea, the Almighty (Psa. xlv. 3; Rev. i. 8); and "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5); over all creatures, angels and men who are made by Him. And He is blessed for ever in Himself.

(iv) He is called "the great God," whose glorious appearing, and not the Father's, saints are directed to look for. Besides, this great God is explained of Jesus Christ our Saviour in the next clause (Tit. ii. 13). Compare with this Rev. xix. 17, where He who is called the great God, is the mighty warrior, whose name is the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords (ver. 11, 13 16).

(v) Christ is also said to be the "living God" (Heb. iii. 12), for He only is spoken of in the context. And this is only said of the most high God, which distinguishes Him from all other deities (Jer. x. 10).

(vi) And, to add no more, He is called "the true God," in opposition to all false and fictitious deities (1 John v. 20), for what is there is said expressly of the Son of God.

II. The Deity of Christ may be proved *from the divine perfections He is possessed of*, "for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. ii. 9), not one perfection of the divine nature excepted, or otherwise it could not be said that all the fulness of Deity was in Him.

### 1. *Self Existence*

God is necessarily self-existent and independent of any. Such is Christ; He is God of Himself. As man and Mediator He has a life given Him for Himself and others, and lives by the Father. But as God, He owes His life and being to none. It is not derived from another. He is over all, God blessed for ever.

### 2. *Eternity*

Eternity is a perfection of God. God is from everlasting to everlasting. Christ was not only before Abraham, but before Adam, and before any creature was in being, for He is the beginning, the first Cause of the creation of God (Rev. iii. 14); the first born, or rather, the first Parent and Producer of every creature, which best agrees with the apostle's reasoning in the next verse where all things are said to be created by Him; and therefore, as the apostle argues, He must be before all things (Col. i. 15, 16, 17). As Mediator, He was set up from everlasting. His goings forth in the covenant were of old. The elect were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world and had grace given them in Him before that began; all which suppose His eternal existence. Hence He is called Alpha and Omega, the first

and the last, the beginning and the ending; which is, and was, and is to come; Melchisedec's antitype, having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Rev. i. 8; Heb. vii. 3).

### 3. *Omnipresence*

Omnipresence, or immensity, is another perfection of Deity (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24). Christ, as the Son of God, was in heaven, in the bosom of His Father, when, as the Son of man, He was here on earth (John i. 18; iii. 13), which He could not be if He were not omnipresent. Nor could He make good His promises to His ministers, churches, and people, to be with them at all times, in all ages, and in all places wherever they are (Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20); nor walk in the midst of His golden candlesticks, the several churches, in different places, and fill all things and persons in them, as He certainly does (Rev. i. 13; Eph. iv. 10).

### 4. *Omniscience*

Omniscience is another divine perfection, and most manifestly appears in Christ. He knew what was in man, and needed not that any should testify to Him what was in man. He could tell the woman of Samaria all that ever she did. He knew from the beginning who would believe in Him and who would betray Him. He knew the secret thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees, and is that Word that is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And He will hereafter let all the world and churches know that He searches the hearts and reins. In short, He knows all things, as Peter affirmed unto Him. (John ii. 24, 25; iv. 29; vi. 64; Matt. ix. 4; Heb. iv. 12; Rev. ii. 23; John xxi. 17). And though He is said not to know the day of judgment, this is said of Him as the Son of man, not as the Son of God (Mark. xiii. 32).

### 5. *Omnipotence*

Omnipotence is a perfection that belongs to Christ and is peculiar to God, who only can do all things. Christ is almighty and His works declare it: the creation of all things, the sustentation of the universe, the redemption and preservation of His people, and the resurrection of them at the last day; all which are "according to His mighty power, which is able to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

### 6 *Immutability*

To observe no more, immutability belongs solely to God, who is without any variability or shadow of turning. And such is Christ, the same today, yesterday, and for ever (Heb. xiii. 8; see Psalm cii. 26, compared with Heb. i. 12). And since therefore such perfections of the Godhead are in Christ, He must be truly and properly God.

III. The truth of Christ's proper divinity may be proved *from the works done by Him which are the same that are done by the Father* and in which He is a co-efficient cause with Him, and are done by Him in like manner as by the Father (John v. 17, 19).

Such as:

1. *Creation*

The creation of all things out of nothing, of the whole world and all things in it, visible or invisible (John i. 2, 3; Col. i. 16). The making of the worlds, the heaven and the earth, is particularly ascribed to the Word, the Son of God. And He that built all things is God (Heb. xi. 3; i. 10; iii. 4).

2. *Providence*

The work of providence, the government of the world, and the disposing of all things in it, Christ is jointly concerned in with the Father: "My Father worketh hitherto; and I work"; that is, with Him (John v. 17).

3. *Upholding All Things*

Christ upholds all things by His power, bears up the pillars of the earth, and by Him do all things consist (Heb. i. 3; Col. i. 17).

4. *Miracles*

The miracles Christ wrought on earth in human nature, as they were proofs of His Messiahship, so of His Deity; such as curing the lame, the blind, and dumb, and deaf, and even raising the dead by speaking a word, which were what none but God could do. These prove that the Father was in Him, and He in the Father (Matt. xi. 4, 5; John x. 37, 38).

5. *Redemption and Salvation*

If He were not the mighty God, He could never have been able to have wrought and obtained the redemption and salvation of His people by His own arm. What gave virtue and efficacy to His blood, to purchase His church and people and cleanse them from their sins, is His Deity, and so to His righteousness, to make it a justifying one before God; and to His sacrifice, to make it expiatory of sin, and acceptable to God.

6. *Forgiveness*

The acts of forgiveness of sin and justification from it are peculiar to God. None can forgive sin but God. Yet Christ has done it, and therefore must be God (Mark ii. 7, 9, 10). It is God that justifies men from sin and acquits them from condemnation (Rom. viii. 1, 33). And so does Christ (Isa. liii. 11).

7. *Resurrection*

The resurrection of the dead is a work of almighty power which none but God can do. And yet Christ has raised Himself from the dead and thereby is declared to be the Son of God with power: that is, truly and properly God (Rom. i. 4. See John ii. 19; x. 18); and He will raise all the dead at the last day by His mighty power. And at His all-commanding voice, the dead will come forth out of their graves wherein they have lain (John v. 28, 29; 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

8. *Judgment*

The judgment of the world is committed to Him. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the

Son" (John v. 22). Now if He were not God omnipotent and omniscient, He would never be able to do what He will do: gather all nations before Him, separate them and place them, some on His right hand and some on His left; bring to light the counsels of the heart, and judge the secrets of it, and give to every man for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; pronounce the several decisive sentences and put them into execution (Matt. xxv. 31-46; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; 2 Cor. v. 10).

#### IV. As a further proof of the Deity of Christ :

##### 1. *Worship of Angels*

The worship given Him both by angels and men may be observed, for when He, God's first-born, was brought into the world, He said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. i. 6), which order to the celestial inhabitants would never have been given if He were not God.

##### 2. *Worship of Men*

It is also the declared will of the divine Father of Christ "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"; that is, worship Him with the same divine worship, which He would never have declared (who will not give His glory to another besides Himself) was not Christ His Son, one God with Him. (See Psalm ii. 12).

##### 3. *Faith and Hope*

Men are directed to exercise faith and hope on Him. Yea, Christ Himself directs unto it, equally to be exercised on Him as on His Father, which He would never have done but that He and His Father are one; one in nature, and so in power and glory (John xiv. 1; x. 30). Yea, if He were not God, but a mere man, instead of men being blessed and happy who make Him their hope, and trust in Him, they would be cursed for so doing (Jer. xvii. 5. 7).

##### 4. *Baptism*

Baptism, a solemn ordinance of religious worship, is ordered to be administered in His name, equally as in the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19), which, if a mere creature, would be idolatry and blasphemy; for which reason the apostle Paul was so cautious lest any should think they were baptized by him in his own name (1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15).

##### 5. *Prayer*

Prayer, another branch of religious worship, is often made to Christ, and that not by a single person only, as by Stephen in his last moments (Acts vii. 58), but by whole churches and communities, who are said in every place to call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

##### 6. *Grace and Peace*

And how often are grace and peace wished for by the apostles, as from God our Father, so from the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. i. 2, 3), all which would never be performed by saints, nor be ad-

mitted of by God, was not Christ truly and properly God!

Nor need we scruple to worship Him nor be fearful lest we should give Him too much. And great encouragement we have to commit our souls, and the salvation of them, into His hands, and trust Him with our all, since He is God, the only Saviour.

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### V. Church Business Confidential

*In answering a question of lesser importance Mr. Philpot emphasises the need for the private affairs of a church to be kept strictly confidential.*

As we believe that no right-thinking person can have a moment's hesitation on the subject, we should consider further words on the matter a mere waste of time, did not the circumstance afford us an opportunity of dropping a few remarks on some points nearly connected with it, and giving a friendly word of caution and admonition to the churches.

Members of churches should bear in mind that a church is a family, and that family matters should never be spoken of out of the family. It is not because a church is or need be ashamed of its transactions that the strictest silence is necessary; but because the world and those that are without have no right to know what takes place in the bosom of the church. The world, we know, would only abuse such knowledge and make a handle of it against the church; and even in those that fear God, but are at present merely members of the congregation and not in church fellowship, there is often a jealous principle at work which would lead them to fall much into the same spirit. All such bit-by-bit information, and all such mere scraps of intelligence as may be picked up in this way, must necessarily be imperfect, the parties themselves being not present; and we all know what an ill use may be made of tags and rags of conversation, and such mere pieces and fragments of church news as may be caught up from flying whispers.

Suppose there be a dispute in the church upon some point. Is the world to pronounce its judgment on a matter of which it knows really nothing beyond a few words which may have been incautiously dropped? Is the world to be our judge? Is its voice to be heard in church meetings and to be our sovereign umpire and arbiter? Cannot we govern ourselves, and need we submit our judgment to those who are not bound up with us in the same yoke of church fellowship? If every member of a Christian church at once indignantly disclaim the right of the world to judge in these matters, may we not at once say, "Why then give it opportunity? You justly deny the right of the world to judge church matters; and yet every time you mention anything that takes place in the church to any one of those that are without, you make

that person a judge of the circumstance mentioned to him."

This then is the point that we wish to bring before members of churches, for we often do things incautiously and unthinkingly which we would not do wilfully and considerately. They must never allow themselves on any occasion to drop a word, or even a hint, of church matters to any person not in church fellowship with them. Husbands and wives are here exposed to peculiar trials, and sometimes strong temptations, when one is a member of the church and the other is not. "My dear, it is a church matter," would be a short and should be a satisfactory answer to any attempt to learn what is going on in the church. But "my dear" will not always be content with such short and simple answers; and where the querist is the weaker vessel, she may be as uneasy to learn the secret as Eve or Delilah. And even where this tender tie does not bring its peculiar temptations, there may be a Christian friend in the congregation with whom union is felt, and to whom, as a dear friend, church matters may be unwarily communicated. Parents again may incautiously drop words before children, from which some idea, necessarily very imperfect, may be gathered of what is going on; and what is deficient in length or breadth may be largely pieced onto by surmise and suspicion.

We therefore desire to impress it by way of caution on the minds of those members of churches who may read these remarks, that they should carefully avoid the slightest whisper about church matters except to members of the same church. All church matters should be considered church property, and that as the church meets with closed doors, so it should part with closed lips.

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#### BOOK NOTICE

**Sermons by J. K. Popham, Volume III;** cloth bound; 267 pages; price £1.40 post free; obtainable from Gospel Standard Publications.

Three things mark the sermons of J. K. Popham. 1. *He always speaks on vital things.* Sin and salvation, the knowledge of self and the knowledge of Christ—these form the substance of his sermons. 2. *He speaks with great simplicity.* Deep doctrines and the most profound truths are handled with great weight and solemnity; but a gracious simplicity and clarity of expression runs through it all. 3. *There is a balance of doctrine and gracious experience.*

This beautifully produced book contains twenty-five previously unpublished sermons. There are two photographs—one of Mr. Popham as an old man; the other of the interior of Galeed Chapel, Brighton, where for so long he was pastor.

Typical brief extracts from the sermons are:

"Election is not that terrible doctrine that the devil represents it to be. It is a merciful, tender, loving doctrine."

"If you have life in your soul, you cannot keep away from the Lord."

"The dear Redeemer has a way of pulling sinners to Himself."

"A full gospel suits an empty sinner."

These are Christ-exalting sermons. The apostle's resolve describes J. K. Popham's ministry—"determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

## THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

*From the writings of Robert Leighton*

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Christ's behaviour was intended as an example. "Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). He left His footsteps as a copy (as the word in the original imports) to be followed by us. Every step of His is a letter of this copy. He wrote us a pure and perfect copy of obedience in clear and great letters, in His own blood.

His whole life is our rule—not indeed His miraculous works, His footsteps walking in the sea, and suchlike (they are not for our following), but His obedience, holiness, meekness and humility are our copy, which we should continually study. The shorter and more effectual way of teaching, they say, is by example; but above all, this matchless example is the happiest way of teaching. "He that followeth Me," says our Lord, "shall not walk in darkness."

He that aims high shoots the higher for it, though he shoot not so high as he aims. This is what ennobles the spirit of a Christian, the propounding of this our high pattern, the example of Jesus Christ.

The imitation of men in worthless things is low and servile; the imitation of their virtues is commendable; but if we aim no higher, it is both imperfect and unsafe. The apostle Paul will have no imitation but with regard to this supreme pattern: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." One Christian may take the example of Christ in many things as exhibited in another, but still he must examine all by the original copy, the footsteps of Christ Himself, following nothing but as it is conformable to that, and looking to Him as the most perfect example (Heb. xii. 2). There is a cloud of witnesses and examples, but look above them all to Him, who is as high above them as the sun is above the clouds. As in the covenant of grace the way is better, a living way indeed, so there is this advantage also: that we are not left to our own skill for following it, but taught by the Spirit. In the delivery of the law, God showed His glory and greatness by the manner of giving it, but the law was written only in dead tables. But Christ, the living Law, teaches by obeying it; and this too is the advantage of the gospel, that the law is twice written over unto believers: first, in the example of Christ, and then inwardly in their hearts by His Spirit. There is, together with that copy of all grace in Him, a spirit derived from Him, enabling believers to follow Him in their measure. They may not only see Him as "the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," but, as there it follows, they receive of "His fulness, and grace for grace." The love of Christ makes the soul delight to converse with Him; and converse and love together make it learn His behaviour.

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### OBITUARY

**Alice Perry**, member of the church at Tamworth Road, Croydon, passed away on October 9th, 1971, in the Aged Pilgrims' Home, Hornsey Rise, aged 83.

I am unable to give a full account of the Lord's dealings with my dear wife. She did not leave anything in the way of writing, but she proved by her life that she was one who feared the Lord. She was brought by the good Spirit of God to feel that she was a poor sinner and nothing at all. Her hope was centred in a precious Christ. The work of grace was begun when she was young. She was blessed with a godly mother and brought up in the fear of the Lord; she attended at Greenwich, later joining the church there in 1913. She often spoke of a sermon much blessed to her; the text was: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Being much blessed under the ministry of Mr. G. Rose at Tamworth Road, Croydon, we joined the church in 1940, feeling at home there. She was a teacher in the Sabbath school, manifesting a prayerful concern for the young, which was maintained even when no longer able to continue this work through infirmity. To a young friend about to join the church she wrote: "To walk worthy of our calling—this has been my desire since I was baptized, and I feel day by day, 'Myself I cannot keep.'"

The last years of her life she was much afflicted and we entered the A.P.F.S. Home at Hornsey Rise, very thankful for this kind provision and for the kind care and attention given us. She wrote to a friend: "I do want to be submissive to the Lord's will, and be thankful for our quiet home here . . . I have been really down, but have been helped." We were favoured with fifty years of happy married life, and I do desire to thank the Lord for the grace that was given to her.

Coming to her last days, I did desire if the Lord's will she might be led to speak as to her mind, but it was not to be. I felt it good that I was able to read and pray with her, and the visits of her pastor and friends were appreciated. On the morning that my dear one passed away, the word came so sweetly to me: "These are they that came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The dear Saviour comes into His garden to gather lilies.

"Dear Lord, more drops of honey send,  
From Christ Thy Son, the sinner's Friend,  
And larger make my share;  
More grapes from Eschol may I bring,  
And of the heavenly Canaan sing,  
Whilst I am stationed here."

S.P.

**Mabel Salway**, member of the church at Chippenham, died on December 4th, 1971, aged 86.

Very early in life she was baptized in the open by Mr. S. Farmer of Malmesbury. On her marriage to Joseph Kilmister, she lived in Yorkshire, but returned to Wiltshire at the end of the 1914-18 War. She and her husband united with the church at the Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham, in 1921. (Her husband was an acceptable minister of the gospel, mainly among the Wiltshire and Berkshire causes.) After Mr. Kilmister's death, she married Mr. Salway, a widower, who was deacon at Chippenham.

Mrs. Salway spoke little of her spiritual experience but her walk before the church and in the home was consistent with her profession of the Lord Jesus, being a true praying pillar and a bulwark for peace. The last words she spoke to the writer were: "Here my best friends, my kindred dwell, Here God my Saviour reigns."

The last time she attended chapel was a few days before her end, when she stood to sing the hymns though noticeably very frail. The closing hymn was "O my soul, admire and wonder," which she sang

without looking at her book. On the following Thursday she was taken ill and passed away quietly in her sleep on Saturday morning.

J.S.

**Spencer Grey Wakeley Hunt**, esteemed member at Ebenezer Chapel, Clapham, died and entered his eternal rest on December 10th, 1971, aged 82.

Our late dear friend was born of godly parents and was brought up to attend Galeed Chapel, Brighton under the pastorate of Mr. J. K. Popham, often in later years expressing his gratitude to the Lord for this great favour and privilege.

The solemnity of death and eternity, with a realisation of his sinfulness in the sight of a just and holy God, were solemnly impressed upon him when about nine years of age by the first line of hymn 1048 (Gadsby's): "We've no abiding city here." Attempts were made to shake off these early convictions, but all in vain, and in his school days he felt himself a greater sinner than other boys who came from ungodly homes, although he was kept from outward evils.

In later days, entering a business life and vocation, conviction of sin deepened, and he was shown more of his lost state and condition, the solemnity of death and eternity, feeling that he was unprepared. At this period, there seemed nothing but condemnation whether in hearing, reading the Scriptures or attempting to pray. His health being affected thereby, he was unable for the time to continue his vocation, being brought (in his feelings) to the borders of despair and tempted to give up reading the Scriptures and attending the services, and to join the army; but being prevented at that time, he obtained some relief and help spiritually from the words, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Our dear friend has often stated, in reflecting upon those days, "I am humbled and astonished at the Lord's longsuffering and forbearance."

In the providence of God, during the First War our friend was posted to Chatham, and having relatives there who attended the chapel, he was shown much kindness, and their timely influence was graciously sanctified in preserving him from breaking the Sabbath except for one particular instance which became a great grief to him, as he felt that he had sinned against light and knowledge.

About this period a younger brother was killed on active service and this was a sad blow, although there was a good hope of his brother; yet it occasioned much heart searching, as he felt that he himself was not prepared for that solemn change, and if *his* life had been taken, hell would have been his just desert.

While on active service in France, the soldier who took our friend's place, through a last minute change of plans, was killed instantly by a shell. This remarkable preservation so affected and amazed him, feeling himself to be such a guilty wretch as before God, that a "Who can tell?" was raised up in his heart that he would yet see "greater things than these," and he was encouraged still to plead for mercy and pardon.

After being invalided out of the army, and returning to business life, he had to endure some trials and persecution in the company he had to associate with. About this period he was much helped under a sermon preached by Mr. Tobitt of Hastings from the words: "It is finished." Our dear friend was much blessed at this time, feeling to be raised up to that good hope through grace which *never left him*, being as an "anchor of the soul" for the remainder of his life. Shortly before he died, a friend quoting this to him, he said, "That is my text."

After his marriage in 1924, living at that time in Croydon, and attending West Street Chapel, our friend felt led to walk in the ordinances of the Lord and was baptized by Mr. Croft, late pastor at West Street.

During the Second World War he was moved to Manchester, his wife

and family joining him. The Lord's preserving providence was over them during their stay in the north, where they were at times in great danger from severe bombing. A favoured time was often referred to at chapel when Psalm lxxxv was read, and our friend felt lifted above all his uncongenial circumstances, rejoicing in the Lord's mercy to such a vile, unworthy sinner as he felt himself to be.

At the close of the war, a way was made for them to return to London and attend Ebenezer, Clapham, where he was helped and blessed at times, feeling able to say, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth." In February 1947, application was made to unite with us in membership, an honourable transfer being granted him from West Street, Croydon. On one occasion a sweet confirming help was given him under Mr. Raven in reading the words, "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious." Mr. Raven said, "It could be rendered, 'If Christ is truly precious to you, then you are a believer.'" Feeling the Lord very precious to him, he could say,

"Yes, thou art precious to my soul,  
My transport and my trust;  
Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,  
And gold is sordid dust."

In 1945 our dear friend suffered a sad bereavement in the loss by death of his first wife, and mother of the family. In this heavy trial it could truly be felt as "concerning them which are asleep that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope." After some years, in the good providence of God another true and devoted helpmeet was provided for him, and in 1950 they were married at Ebenezer, Clapham, his devoted wife being helped tenderly and affectionately to care for him during the remainder of his life. When his mental and physical powers failed, it was very marked how the inner man was renewed so that it could be said of him that "his conversation was in heaven."

During his last illness, hymn 9 (Gadsby's) was read to him, and he said, "I can go with every line of it." Once in asking a blessing before a meal and thanking the Lord for the provision, he said with much feeling, "But *more, more, more* because of Jesus' blood." A visiting friend quoting the words, "Wrestling prayer can wonders do," he joined in, repeating the last words of each line in the hymn. Shortly after this the last conflict began but grace reigned and his last recorded words were, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honour, power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. AMEN" (with great emphasis). Soon after this dying testimony, our dear friend was taken to his eternal home. We record the goodness of the Lord that through the care of his dear wife and family help, our late friend did not have to be removed to hospital, but died at home. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." J.D.

**Ruth S. Robbins**, a member at Bethel Chapel, Bath, passed away peacefully on 11th January, 1972, at the age of 86.

A daughter of Mr. Thomas Robbins, who held pastorates at Chippenham and Leicester, she was baptized at Bethel on 2nd May, 1909, and from that time has been a loyal and much loved member of the church. Very evidently a vessel of mercy, she would never boast great things of herself. Her feelings were once expressed in these lines:

"Then why so sad, my soul? though bad,  
Thou hast a Friend that's good;  
He bought thee dear (abandon fear);  
He bought thee with His blood."

The writer was privileged to have many times of sweet spiritual conversation with her during the last five years or so, and her love for

her Saviour, His Word, His people and His house, was such that she did indeed continue to bring forth fruit in old age. Hymn 938 was a great favourite with her, especially the verse,

“ I love to meet among them now,  
Before Thy gracious feet to bow,  
Though vilest of them all.”

She last attended the chapel on Wednesday evening, 15th December, when she heard a sermon preached from the text, “Return unto thy rest O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” This was made a blessing to her and from that time onward it seemed as though she was being prepared to enter into that rest that remaineth. The closing weeks of her life gave abundant evidence of upholding grace and sweet anticipation of glory. A short time before she died, she sat up in bed in the early hours of the morning and sang clearly and firmly:

“ Ten thousand times ten thousand,  
In sparkling raiment white,  
The armies of the ransomed saints  
Throng up the steeps of light;  
’Tis finished! all is finished  
Their fight with death and sin;  
Fling open wide the golden gates  
And let the victors in.”

A few days later she was called away to join that blessed company, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

She will be much missed among her many friends, especially those of the household of faith. Solemnly we reflect that:

“ Old sheep are moving off each year  
And few lambs in the fold appear.”

P.M.K.

**Sarah Emma Heywood**, member of the church at Thurlstone, Yorkshire, passed away suddenly on February 14th, 1972, aged 80. She was baptized by Mr. W. B. G. Vaughan in 1924 and had been a faithful and consistent member.

Mr. B. Walshaw took the burial on February 18th, and said, “She is safely on the other side and Jesus waiting there to meet her.” Our loss, but her eternal gain. H.B.

**Sydney Rolph** died in the Lord at the Hove Bethesda Home on March 16th, 1972, aged 58, “fully ripe.” He attended Galeed Chapel, Brighton for about twenty years. The work of grace in his heart was clear and deep; the savour of grace, like Mary’s ointment (Jno. xii. 3), filled the Home. Further particulars may follow. F.L.G.

*The above accounts have been condensed.*

Three things are simply necessary unto any man’s having of true religion and godliness; sound principles of divine truth known, the saviour of that knowledge in the heart; and the power of that savour in a man’s worship and walk.

*Traill*

Take the greatest prince and monarch in the world; a few figures in arithmetic will count all his wealth and all that he is worth. But all the arithmetic in the world cannot count the believer’s stock, who hath Christ for his Friend and Husband, for it is the unsearchable riches of Christ.

*R. Erskine*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

JUNE, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## WALK ABOUT ZION

*Sermon preached by Mr. F. L. Gosden at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on Friday evening, 14th April, 1972.*

**Text:** "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death" (Psa. xlvi. 12-14).

"Walk about Zion." Micah says: "All people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." And this we observe—a people walking after their gods, and there are gods many. There is the god of greed, the sordid gold of this world; the god of pleasures, of sports; the god of power. And what a thirst for power there is among the nations! There are many gods, "and all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord *our* God for ever and ever." That could never be said about their gods. It can be said of nothing beneath the sun—"for ever and ever"—for all things here below are hastening to desolation, and with us each the sands of time are sinking. Therefore, we would look at this blessed distinction between the gods of the nations, and the Lord our God.

The psalmist here exhorts the Lord's people to "walk about Zion." The heads of States are running about one to another in this solemn perilous time. It seems as though the control of things is entirely out of the hands of governments. Nations are suspicious one of another, and there is a running to and fro (Dan. xii. 4). The psalmist here invites the people of God to come and see the blessed contrast between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdoms of this world. And upon this point that beautiful Psalm ii shows that contrast: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." That is exactly the attitude of the world today. But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." There is nothing to envy in the world, my friends, and O how sacred it is at times to be gathered among His people, as we are gathered now! "Gather My saints together unto Me: those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Psa. 1. 5). And we do believe that this is a *gathering*, and not merely a meeting together. There is a very great difference in

meeting together, and being gathered together by the individual exercise of soul, the influence of the Holy Ghost. "They shall ask their way to Zion." Have you been given to see this world, as Solomon saw it, by the teaching of the blessed Spirit? "Vanity of vanities"; "vexation of spirit." There is nothing abiding. The Lord has arisen to shake terribly the nations (Isaiah ii. 19). There is nothing here that is stable.

"Walk about Zion: tell the towers thereof." O what a mercy if we are citizens of Zion! "No more strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." I do pray for our rising generation that they may be taught of God, whereas it may be even now they are asking their way to everywhere and everything *except* Zion. O that that appointed time might come when their feet will be turned another way, and their language changed, so that "they shall ask their way to Zion, with their faces thitherward"! It is not everyone that does that. Their faces are towards Zion, their eyes are there, their affections are there. They go with prayer: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" "Let us join ourselves unto the Lord"—nothing else will do. If you do not join yourself to the Lord, you do not partake of Him, and we must partake of Him, there must be contact; otherwise we shall not receive of His fulness, life and grace, pardon and mercy, righteousness and holiness, and heavenly wisdom. "Let us join ourselves unto the Lord." It is a mercy if nothing else can satisfy.

"Walk about Zion." Her defences are invisible; salvation is her walls. "I will be a wall of fire round about her, and her glory in the midst." O the strength of Zion! It is impregnable. There is nothing else in this world that is impregnable. She is built upon Christ, the eternal Rock; built upon His divine Person, united with human nature. And that Rock is immovable. Everything is in Christ, and the vital secret of the strength of the foundation is the unity between His divine Person and human nature. And that human nature is sinless. Not only sinless in the life that He lived, but sinless in His immaculate virgin birth, which is the doctrine upon which everything else stands.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof." One tower, which includes everything really, is the Name of the Lord. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." And what is the Name of the Lord? It is what He is. It incorporates all His perfections and His attributes. O what a strong tower this is! This is the tower into which Habakkuk went. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower."

Another tower is the appointed ministry of the gospel, where His watchmen are. What tower does the minister stand upon? He stands upon the merits, the grace, the Person, the work, the sufferings, the sacred death, the glorious resurrection, the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is all in Him.

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks.” Her bulwarks are her defences. And now, we would speak of the first bulwark, and that is *the everlasting, electing love of the Father*. O what a bulwark this is! It embraces the whole of His infinite Being. “Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate.” Sovereign election is a bulwark. I know it is abhorrent to human nature. If you touch the election of God, you have touched His divine sovereignty. There is nothing can be substituted for election, and it is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. He foreknew His people, and He chose them individually. He knows those that are His. They are His by choice, according to the foreknowledge of God, and His eternal love in the covenant of grace.

There is another bulwark we would speak of. That is, *the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. Those very same individuals, without exception, the Lord Jesus came to save. “All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me.” Every one of these people will be gathered in time, between the cradle and the grave. “Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance” (Ex. xv. 17). That is a bulwark. And another part of that bulwark of the sovereign electing love of the Father, and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is that the same individuals to the last person will be gathered together in glory.

And these bulwarks also embrace *the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul*. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are equal—three Persons. Three Persons, but one love; three Persons, but one purpose; three Persons, but one blessed people to be gathered.

“Walk about Zion,” and see what material it is built with. It is built with living stones gathered in. “Mark ye well her bulwarks,” and the strength of these bulwarks is in *the divine perfections of Jehovah*. Everything in Zion partakes of the nature of God Himself. It is a wonderful thing, my friends, to be a child of God in whose being, in whose heart is established the kingdom of grace. It will issue in the kingdom of glory. You look at a child of God. All the purposes of God are toward that person. All the streams of salvation terminate in Zion, and therefore in measure they terminate in the salvation of a poor sinner. For that reason it is said of Zion by Christ: “This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” Now, listen, what is said of Zion belongs to every individual, and I wonder who there are here of whom it can be said, to this or that person, “This is My rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” Wonderful thing! You look outside of this gospel, and outside of the Lord Jesus, and see this poor world. O it will make Christ precious, and you will say with respect to His people:

“Numbered with them may I be  
Now, and in eternity.”

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers

thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks." Everything that we are occupied with in the Church of God, in Zion, is eternal. Sometimes it is so blessed that it almost paralyses one to realize the majesty of it. Omnipotence, divine sovereignty, immutability, cannot be communicated to a creature, yet (and this is the mercy of it), every blessing of salvation has those perfections in it. When grace reaches your heart, it is invincible grace. If the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, it is everlasting love, it is immutable love. "Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end."

Sometimes you will find these towers in the means of grace, according to that word in Jeremiah: "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion." *I venture to say that there is not a low place in Zion.* The lowest place, if there is such a thing, is higher than the highest place in this world. Some of you have felt this when you have made your way to Zion.

"With joy we hasten to the place."

If you could only get your head inside a chapel, and hear the glorious gospel! It is all that you need, and it comes from heaven. "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." There were times, and I do trust I am not deceived, when years ago I was favoured to sit in a pew when I felt the very atmosphere was charged with a living power of the Holy Spirit. And it pervades the soul.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." Not only walk about Zion, but consider her palaces. "God is known in her palaces for a Refuge." The real palace, although it seems impossible, is a poor sinner's heart, sanctified, where Christ dwells the hope of glory. But the meaning of the palace here is the churches of God. It pleased Him to institute the church from the very beginning. In Genesis we find: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (xlix. 10). He need not have established a church, but God so purposes it. The church is His body, and "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

"Consider her palaces." The dignity of a palace is that a king dwells there. We read in Psalm cxxxii: "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation." Wonderful words of Him whose glory and majesty is unspeakable; He who is infinite, whose Being cannot be contained, and therefore, His dwelling place is eternity. How unspeakable that He should choose Zion! It is the only place in this world that He dwells in, graciously and savingly. "The Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever."

Now, this is how we have to consider her palaces. All the streams of salvation flow exclusively to Zion, and nowhere else (Psalm xli. 4). And when it reaches Zion, it reaches its terminus. Therefore, when it reaches a poor sinner, with respect to that

sinner it reaches its terminus, and those streams will become effectual in all their spiritual properties. You remember in Ezekiel about the river which proceeded from under the threshold of the house, and wherever those streams ran it brought life. But there is one important feature which it is well to mark in that account. The reason why it had vital living properties was because of the source; and so it is with the flowings of grace, the streams that make glad the city of God. They derive their virtue from their blessed source.

“Consider her palaces.” And the Lord has promised: “I will abundantly bless her provision.” He does not promise to bless innovations and side-shows, but He promises to bless the provisions He has made in Zion. As the unspeakable gift of God He dwells there, and He really is the provision, the bread and water of life. “All my springs are in Thee.” But there are provisions, and He will bless them.

What a great provision is *the Word of God*, the holy Scriptures. One of the most blatant sins is for our modern scholars to tamper with the Word of God. The light that is in them is darkness, and not only so, but as we said lately, to touch the sacred Word of God is to commit a most dreadful sin. It is a sin against the Holy Ghost who inspired the Scriptures. This sacred Word is given by divine inspiration, and it is a blessed provision. His servants are bidden to preach the Word, and the “written and the incarnate Word in all things are the same.” Therefore, it makes the Word of God exceedingly important, and we might well examine ourselves as to how we read the Word of God. What has it done for us? What have we received from it? What authority has it in our lives? “Consider her palaces.” “I will abundantly bless the provision of thy house.”

Another provision is *the divine appointment of the ministry of the gospel*. O how important that is! The importance of it we have revealed when Paul was sent to preach. The Lord said to him: “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee . . . to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” This is a provision in her palaces. Consider it. Joined to the preaching of the gospel is the salvation of souls (I Cor. i. 21). Well, this has tried me. Look at the effects that the preaching of the gospel should have, and then let a minister look at his ministry. If these effects are never accomplished by a minister’s ministry, how can he believe that he has received his credentials from heaven? You look at them. “Open their eyes. turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them

which are sanctified by faith in Him." What a tremendous effect! And not only with respect to a minister, but to those that hear. You look at Acts xxvi. 18 at your leisure, and then see whether those effects have been accomplished in you. If they never are, it is very solemn. "Consider her palaces"—there we have the glorious King, the unspeakable gift of God; there we have His inspired Word, and the appointment of the ministry.

Another provision that He has promised to bless in His palace, the church of God, is *prayer*. O it is wonderful, my friends, to pray! O I have long wished I could pray. I felt the Prayer Meeting this morning suited my case: "Be not weary in well doing." But I *am* weary. I had to tell the Lord that I am weary, not *of* it, but heart and flesh fails. "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Prayer is the most vital thing in religion, in experience. It is a solemn thing to make a profession of religion, and get nothing from God. Prayer is a mystery. Emmanuel, God with us in human nature, has gotten the victory over death, sin and hell, and is exalted, an ever-living Intercessor in heaven; and therefore, there can be communications from the throne of grace by the Holy Spirit to individual sinners each in their little corner. The Lord knows who are His, and where they are. It is a mystery that there can also be communications from poor sinners to heaven that bring immortal blessings down.

"Consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following." In Psalm cii we read: "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. *This shall be written for the generation to come.*" There will ever be a remnant. Paul said to the Romans: "Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." And that "present time" will be perpetuated to the end. There will always be that "present time" while the world lasts. Thus, we would pray for the generation following.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever." This glorious God is described by the towers, the bulwarks, the palaces. These represent all the attributes of Jehovah, and, "This God is our God for ever and ever." Now, we commenced with this: "All people will walk in the name of their god, and we will walk in the Name of the Lord," and here we have, "This God is our God for ever and ever." It just means this: that everything in the gospel of salvation, and everything with which we are occupied in the church, is eternal. Nothing else is. What a mercy to be able to say with Jeremiah: "The Lord is my Portion, saith my soul, Therefore will I hope in Him"! It is no use what infidels and atheists say, whatever they may attain to, however large their earthly estate; there can be nothing better said of it at the end than: "Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust." Nothing better!

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers

thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever." This incorporates everything. All flows from Him; there will be nothing eternal without Him. O it will cause the arms of your faith to stretch out unto Him. We read in Psalm cxliii: "I stretch forth my hands unto Thee." In the midst of tribulation you will be able with Job to say: "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" I wonder if there are any of our young people here that are beginning to be brought to that. God had stripped Job, and He strips His people. We have known of some that have been stripped of everything that was dear to them in this life, and been made submissive. Job did not say: "O that the Sabeans had never carried away my camels! O that the winds had never blown down my property! O that I had never been bereaved of my sons!" No, not a word. What had he left? "Oh that I knew where I might find *Him!*" "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" And sometimes He will fill *your* heaven, and *your* earth, and *your* afflictions, and *your* trials, and then you will be able to say: "My light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while I look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

I wish I could speak of it more. I feel a love to His people, a love to you gathered together here. May the Lord bless this word in the midst of these terrible conditions today. Just one thing more. He said: "My kingdom is not of this world." That has been a comfort to me in these solemn times, when you see how things are going on, when you go into the streets in this city, and see the defilement and ruin that abounds everywhere. It is like a still small voice that penetrates through all, and reaches the heart and says: "My kingdom is not of this world." Is that enough? No, He says: "The kingdom of God is within you." That is the only place it will do you any good. Amen.



If a man be careless whether truth sinks or swims, he is not one who walks in Christ, or holds the Head (Col. ii. 19). Some instead of "holding the Head," they hold the foot; it is enough to them that such a good man or such a learned man says so and so concerning this or that truth, and so they let the Head go and hold the foot. R. Erskine

Our blessed Joseph loves His friends and brethren so well that He cannot endure them long out of His presence. He will make us know that it is the greatest piece of our mercy, and the best ingredient in our enjoyment, to have still a new errand put into our hands to bring us back again.

*Michael Bruce, 1666*

It would be intolerable torment for an unregenerate soul to be in heaven. *J. K. Popham*

## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES

**Report of the Annual Meeting of the Gospel Standard Societies  
held on Friday, 14th April 1972, at Gower Street Memorial Chapel,  
London.**

### MORNING PRAYER MEETING:

Mr. J. S. Green in the Chair read Galatians vi, and spoke as follows:

I have thought that the words in the 9th verse of this chapter are very applicable to us. The apostle exhorted these Galatians not to be weary in well doing. In days of adversity we are very liable to grow weary, to be dispirited and cast down, and may sometimes wonder whether it is any use our praying for various things, but we need the Holy Spirit mercifully to revive us, and to keep us alive that we may not grow weary in prayer, that we may still seek to pray for God's servants, and that the word through them may be owned and blessed of God.

God's servants sometimes grow weary when there seems to be little fruit to their labours. Godly deacons, godly members and true friends of the church of God are liable to grow weary. The Lord in His love and mercy preserve us from this. We need Him to give us grace still to be faithful, even over a few things. God will not own and bless that which is not according to His Word. I have thought of those words where the Lord said—not, "Well done, good and *successful* servant," but—"Well done, thou good and *faithful* servant." Some of God's servants have not seemed to reap much in their ministry, but after the Lord has taken them home the fruits have appeared. We should not be weary in well doing because God hath promised by His servant David in Psalm xciv, "The Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance, but judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it."

It was once mentioned to a minister that he did not seem to preach so well as he used to do, and he said he felt he had lost his "prayer book"; his friends did not continue to pray for him as once they did. The Lord preserve us from this weariness in prayer. May we have the spirit of the hymnwriter who said:

" My soul shall pray for Zion still,  
While life or breath remains;  
There my best friends, my kindred dwell;  
There God my Saviour reigns."

We hope you dear young friends, whom we are very pleased to see with us today, may have the help of the Holy Spirit still to pray for Zion, for the dear people of God, and for the prosperity of Zion.

There is this promise, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Some of us have to confess that we are often ready to faint. Solomon in the Proverbs said, "If thou faint in the day

of adversity, thy strength is small." We may have to confess often that our faith does seem weak, but the Lord can strengthen it. The husbandman does not expect to reap immediately he has sown his seed. The winter may have to come upon it, and other things, but there is that due season for reaping. O that God would, in His love and mercy, hear prayer, and return to us, that there might be a little gracious reaping in the midst of Zion, that God would come again in power in the ministry, and truly bless the Word, that poor lost sinners might be quickened by the Holy Spirit, and made to cry, "What must we do to be saved?" I believe these are the people who help God's servants to preach. And those of you who have the responsibilities of some of the little causes, may the Lord help you, and encourage you to hold fast, to keep close to His precious Word, for God will never be contrary to His Word. There is that gracious promise, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Hymns 952, 677 and 1021 were sung during the Meeting, and the following were helped to speak in prayer: Mr. Levell (Clapham); Mr. Hill (Luton); Mr. Rose (Croydon); Mr. Pocock (South Moreton); Mr. Cockram (Croydon), and Mr. Green concluded.

#### AFTERNOON MEETING:

The Chairman, Mr. F. L. Gosden, gave out Hymn 1, and read 2 Thessalonians ii, after which Mr. Message (Heathfield) spoke in prayer.

MR. POLLINGTON: Dear Friends, Once again it is my privilege to introduce to you the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Charities, with some account of the work that has been carried on throughout the year.

As you all know, this is the Centenary year of the Gospel Standard Aid Society, which was formed in the year 1872. An inaugural Meeting was held on the 17th May, 1872, when this Society, especially for the aid of the Lord's servants, was founded. The first Annual Meeting was held on the 8th August, 1873. This Society has been maintained by the Lord for one hundred years, and I believe has rendered great service to the Lord's servants and their dependents over that period. It still does render service to the Lord's servants whose ministerial income, compared with the average value of incomes in this country today, is very small. The work of the Aid Society continues to increase—grants in 1966 were £2,531, and grants in 1971 were £3,354. So I do particularly commend to your generosity the work of the Aid Society. Especially, I would ask our dear young friends to interest themselves in this—the support of the Lord's servants who minister to us week by week, several times in the week. The exhortation of the Word of God is that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

The Poor Relief Society still continues its work. It is able to help chapels who are in difficulties in finding finance for repairs and necessary work to chapel buildings, as well as assistance to the poor of the Lord's people.

In addition to this, as you know, the two Charitable Societies own the publishing rights of the *Gospel Standard*, which were given to the Societies in the year 1879. I am unable to say what the circulation of the

*Gospel Standard* was in those days,\* but it was considerably greater than now. The circulation today remains more or less static at around 3,000 a month, or 36,000 publications a year. There is interest in the Magazines outside the denomination and outside this country. Two hundred and twenty *Gospel Standards* go to the United States every month, and 130 *Friendly Companions*; 50 *Gospel Standards* to Australia, and 50 *Friendly Companions*. Others go to Holland, Canada, New Zealand, Ghana, Kenya, Rhodesia, India and Ceylon. We can never tell what the Lord may do by means of the truth which is spread in our magazines, and we would like to think and hope they may find their way into some of the dark places of the earth.

Then we have also tributes to the *Gospel Standard* from other denominations. I would like to read two. A Church of England minister says: "The *Gospel Standard* has always set a high standard. There is a savouriness about this dear magazine which I myself find difficult to match elsewhere." Another from a member of the Free Church of Scotland: "I consider the *Gospel Standard* is the best magazine that is published today. It is the most spiritual. Its contents humble sinful man, and exalt a precious Christ. I can assure you that the *Gospel Standard* is highly appreciated amongst the godly in the Isle of Lewis." Some of you may have visited the Isle of Lewis on holiday, and you will know that the Sabbaths in the Isle of Lewis are very quiet. I would think it is the quietest place in the British Isles on the Sabbath day.

Before reading the following Report of the *Gospel Standard* Aid and Poor Relief Societies, the Secretary drew attention to and apologised for the printing mistakes in the Report, particularly the dating of the auditor's certificate.

## GOSPEL STANDARD AID AND POOR RELIEF SOCIETIES

### ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1971

Dear Friends

We meet today on a memorable occasion, this being the one hundredth Annual Meeting of the Aid Society. Those who assembled at that first Meeting are now in eternity, many we believe partakers of that "inheritance which is incorruptible and that fadeth not away."

Many changes have taken place since that day—there has been a solemn declension in the denomination—affairs in the nation have rapidly deteriorated and the enemy of souls is making havoc in the churches and throughout the land. If ever there was a need for prayer, it is today. How few there are who seek after vital religion, and how many there are who are satisfied with a "form of godliness denying the power thereof," even in our own churches.

The Aid Society was founded to grant relief to aged and infirm Strict Baptist ministers and their widows in connection with the *Gospel Standard*, and grants of 5s. were made periodically in times of need. Today, recipients receive regular grants of up to £2 per week and you will observe from the accounts printed with this Report that the total expended in grants during the year amounted to £3,400. There are at present thirty-four recipients of this Fund, and it is due to the benevolence of friends that we are able to make such substantial payments. The whole of the surplus at the end of the year has been invested, and by the increase in income from investments we hope to review individual grants during the year, whereby some will receive increases.

The Poor Relief Society has been similarly maintained, and application is being made to the Charity Commissioners for permission to raise the income limit of the recipients. If this is granted, we shall be able to review these pensions likewise.

Considerably more use has been made of the Convalescent Fund

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\*1879—the circulation was 16,585 a month.

this year, when £135 was sent to those afflicted friends in need of rest and change after illness.

From the many letters of appreciation received from our aged friends it is a pleasure to be able to give them a little help towards the necessities of this life.

Though we have great cause for thankfulness to the Lord for His mercies to us as a Committee and a denomination, we have been saddened by the removal from our midst of Mr. H. W. Jones and Mr. S. F. Paul. Mr. Jones, though of a quiet temperament, was a gracious praying member of the Committee and ever contended for the faith. Mr. Paul, also a humble and meek member, was raised up by God to serve his generation by the literary talents bestowed upon him by the Lord, and time alone will reveal the fruits of his pen. It can be said of each of our dear late friends: "... after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell upon sleep."

Again we solicit your prayers for our esteemed Editors, who through another year have by God's grace been enabled to set before us wholesome reading matter. We are reminded in the Word of God that "of making of many books there is no end." Today we see many books which are written under the inspiration of Satan and from which we pray our young people may be delivered. We exhort you dear young friends to purchase the magazines and to read the Word of God which is able to make you wise unto salvation.

In conclusion we thank you for your continued practical and prayerful support, and would humbly acknowledge the Lord's help and His unfailing and abounding mercies throughout another twelve months at times when we have felt ready to give up.

May He richly bless you each at home and abroad with a felt sense of His presence.

Brethren pray for us,  
Yours to serve,  
THE COMMITTEE.

SECRETARY: I would just draw your attention to the third paragraph in which we said that we would be reviewing the grants of the Aid Society. This has already been done, and each recipient from the Aid Society now receives £2 a week. With regard to the fourth paragraph, we have made representations to the Charity Commissioners, and they have agreed that we can now raise the income limits of a married person to £14.50 a week, and in the case of a single person to £12 a week. This will enable far more of our aged friends who are in need of financial help to obtain help from us, and I would ask our subscribers, if they do know of any cases, not to hesitate to write to me, when I will then send the necessary forms which will receive sympathetic consideration by the Committee.

It was proposed by Mr. Pavlik (Beulah, Notting Hill), and seconded by Mr. Hill (Luton) that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Aid and Poor Relief Societies, with the explanation of the Secretary, be approved and adopted. Carried *nem con.*

The following Report of the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund was then read by the Secretary, in the absence of Mr. V. Farley:—

### GADSBY MEMORIAL CHRISTMAS FUND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1971

Dear Friends,

Through the continued kindness of the Lord, this Fund has been maintained through another year. Due to your generous liberality, for which we thank you, and to the receipt of a legacy, it has been possible to assist a number of our needy friends more substantially than in the past.

The distribution during December amounted to £1,894 and in addition, help afforded during the year in the form of grants amounted to £254, making a total of £2,148 expended, which is the highest since the commencement of the Fund.

You will be encouraged to learn that these grants are deeply appreciated, as one dear aged friend wrote, "Words just fail me to express our heartfelt gratitude."

Our friend, Mr. Farley, is still unable to deal with the affairs of the Fund, and our prayers go to him in his prolonged affliction. Our sincere thanks are extended to his dear wife in her labours in connection with the Fund, and we pray: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Yours to serve,  
THE SUB-COMMITTEE.

MR. POLLINGTON: I would just remind you that the Gadsby Fund is available to help anyone, irrespective of age, not only at Christmas, but at any time of the year.

Mr. Haynes (Redhill) proposed, and Mr. S. Pollington (Rotherfield) seconded that the Report and Accounts of the Gadsby Memorial Christmas Fund for 1971 be approved and adopted. Carried *nem con*.

MR. POLLINGTON: We now come to the Bethesda Fund Report. As you know, much activity has gone on during the year with the Bethesda Committee, particularly in connection with the new Home at Brighton.

The Report of the Bethesda Fund was then read by Mr. Watts:

### GOSPEL STANDARD BETHESDA FUND ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1971

We are constrained as we look back into the year 1971 to begin our Annual Report with the opening words of the 115th Psalm: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory." These words were read at the Thanksgiving Service held in the new Bethesda Home at Hove on the moving-day last December and they express the feelings of the Bethesda Fund Committee in reviewing the events of the past year.

It takes but a few seconds to say that the new Home at Hove was built and furnished during 1971 and that the fifteen residents were moved from the old Brighton Home before the year ended. But only those who were closely connected with the work can appreciate to the full the many ups and downs, the doubts and fears, the hopes and anxieties which alternated as the work proceeded. As we look back upon the year and see the many mountains which have been levelled, we are able to say with the apostle in the 13th chapter of Hebrews: "For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper."

Full information about the new Home at Hove is detailed in the leaflet prepared for the Opening Day, and it is not necessary to repeat the details in this Report. The Committee was entirely satisfied with the architect and with the firm of builders, and would like to express its thanks to them and to everyone connected with the work: also to acknowledge the wonderful co-operation given by Mr. Samuel Gross of Gross Cash Registers Ltd., the purchaser of the old property at 171 Preston Road, Brighton, and in particular, his generous gift of a washing-up machine for the Home. We thank all members of the staff and each member of the Home Committee for their help in planning so efficiently the move from the old Home. Especial thanks in this matter are due to the Matron and to the Secretary of the Home Committee.

Financially, the Fund has been well supported during another year

and we thank the churches and congregations for yet another increase in chapel collections. We solicit your continued generosity in this way, and we commend the Fund, with its rapidly increasing needs, to other churches and individuals. Especially to our younger friends would we commend the work of the Homes in the hope that it may afford them scope for prayerful interest and practical support, and so encourage them to a greater awareness of the fundamentals of our faith from which such works proceed. The final cost of the Hove Home will not be known until the middle of 1972, but it is hoped that the original estimate of £98,000 mentioned in last year's Annual Report will not be exceeded.

The desirability of providing more efficient and up-to-date equipment for the day to day running of the Homes to comply with higher standards recommended by the Welfare Authorities is still a matter of considerable concern. This problem however is being partly overcome by the volume of gifts in kind from many generous friends, and this has helped to release funds which would not otherwise be available, to pay for new domestic appliances and other equipment. These gifts therefore have not only greatly helped in the housekeeping of the Homes but have contributed toward a higher standard of equipment, and we do thank all our friends who have helped in this practical way.

The Waiting List for residence in the Homes continues to fluctuate between forty and fifty. Not all are in urgent need of accommodation but acute difficulties are still experienced in finding room for some friends who are unable to continue much longer in their own homes. The six Homes are now capable of accommodating ninety-eight residents.

We have cause for much thankfulness to the Lord regarding staff. Although there have been staff difficulties at several of the Homes and some problems still exist, we are greatly encouraged by new appointments during the year at Haydock, Harpenden and Hove, and we believe this is yet another sign of the Lord's favour towards us. The tireless service throughout another year of a small but loyal staff is a remarkable feature of the Bethesda work and the denomination is indebted to them for their continued labour. May the Lord constrain others to join in this important and rewarding work.

Support for the Bethesda Fund continues to be received from the U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand, and donations are also received regularly from Scotland. We cordially thank all our friends and supporters from home and overseas and we express our thanks to each Matron and to every member of the staff: also to all who serve on the Home Committees.

May the Lord give to each "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (I Peter iii. 16) and may He give us each a single eye to His glory in all that we undertake for the comfort and well-being of the elderly and infirm friends in our beloved denomination.

Yours to serve,

THE BETHESDA FUND COMMITTEE.

MR. WATTS: I have been asked, friends, to make one or two further announcements about Bethesda. First, to say that although the final cost of the new Home at Hove will not be known for another two or three months, the Committee has good reason to believe that the contract price will not be exceeded. We are also pleased to say that the cost of furnishing and equipping the Home will be slightly less than the original estimate. In these days of rising prices, this, I feel, is particularly gratifying.

On the other hand, the Committee is faced with a somewhat unexpected additional expenditure in the need to make up the drive to the Home from the Old Shoreham Road, and also to surface the rear access to the Home. Until a few weeks ago, it was thought that the cost of this would be borne by the Local Authority, or that they would at least contribute substantially towards the cost, but it is now evident that the Bethesda

Fund Committee will have to meet this cost itself. The cost is expected to be in the region of £1,400, and it is essential that this work be put in hand immediately. For this reason the Committee has decided to keep open the Brighton Building Fund until the end of the year in the hope that donations might be received towards the cost of this extra work.

The other announcement is that since the building of the new Home, the waiting list has eased quite considerably, and the number on the list today is thirty-five, less than half of whom are in really urgent need of accommodation.

MR. POLLINGTON: I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Committee for the tremendous amount of work that our Secretary has put in during the past year, especially in connection with the new Home at Brighton and Hove. We feel that our Secretary is indeed the Lord's gift to the Bethesda Committee. The care for, and accommodation of, the 98 aged and sometimes very infirm friends is a great responsibility, and if you look at the Consolidated Balance Sheet of the Bethesda Fund at the 31st December, 1971, on page 11 of your Report, you will see that the financial responsibility is also very heavy.

It was proposed by Mr. Levell (Clapham), and seconded by Mr. Goodge (West Row), that the Report and Accounts of the Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund as printed be approved and adopted. Carried *nem con*.

MR. POLLINGTON: I would just like to say a word in connection with the Watch Committee. You will know that a letter was sent to the Prime Minister, a copy of which was published in the *Gospel Standard*, concerning the entry of this country into the European Economic Community. A number of questions were asked, and several friends have enquired whether there was any reply to this letter. There was, in fact, a reply which was in rather general terms, but I will read three paragraphs from the letter for your information. It came from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

"I have been asked to reply to your letter of the 26th July addressed to the Prime Minister.

"The Treaty to which we would accede if we joined the Communities regulates only economic and commercial activities. It would have no effect whatsoever on the church. People in Britain would continue to be free to worship as they wished.

"As Protestants you should also know that the Protestant religion would be predominant in an enlarged Community.

"With respect we consider that it would be a mistake, from the religious or any other point of view, to remain isolationist as a country. On the contrary, we regard this as an excellent opportunity to cooperate with our neighbours and to work together to form a more stable and united Europe. Entering the Community would not mean any loss of heritage or sovereignty."

Following that, about seventy copies of our letter were sent to members of the Cabinet, and to several members of Parliament. We also had a letter from the Private Secretary to Mr. Rippon. I will read a short extract from this letter:

"I would draw your attention to Mr. Rippon's statement in the House on 22nd December that ecclesiastical views, doctrines and practices will not in any way be affected by our entry to the European Communities.

"I hope that you will publicise this letter and the text of Mr. Rippon's answer in the House among your members, and that Mr. Rippon's reply will give them assurance for the future."

One other matter which the Watch Committee have taken up. Many of you will doubtless have seen in the *Daily Telegraph* last Monday, 10th April, reference to what is called the "hymnbook" for use in schools. The report states that 50,000 copies of it have been sold to schools in

many parts of the country. The contents, judging by the specimens published in the *Telegraph*, which doubtless many of you have seen, are blasphemous, and the Watch Committee felt that we should send a protest from this Meeting to the Secretary of State for Education and Science. I realize that she has denied responsibility for this, and has said that she has no authority, but I feel that we should bring this to her attention. I will read the letter which it is proposed to send to Mrs. Thatcher, a copy of which will be sent to the Inner London Education Authority, which is the Authority concerned with education in the London Boroughs. The letter is addressed personally to Mrs. Thatcher:—

“The attention of the Watch Committee of the Gospel Standard Strict Baptists has been drawn to a report (*Daily Telegraph*, 10th April 1972) of a ‘hymnbook’ now being sold to schools in ‘many parts of the country.’

“Of the two specimens given, one is almost meaningless. The other is open blasphemy. It is repulsive to Christians, it vilifies the Christian religion and is unfit to print. A heavy responsibility rests on those who have sanctioned the printing of the book and its use in schools. Such use can only encourage the young in the ways of anarchy and violence.

“The Gospel Standard Strict Baptists, assembled at their Annual Meeting in London on Friday, 14th April, 1972, enter a solemn protest against this blasphemous reference to the ever-blessed Son of God, and urge you, Madam, as Secretary of State for Education and Science, to use your authority to ban the use of this hymnbook (so-called) from England’s schools.”

On being put to the Meeting, there was unanimous agreement that this letter should be sent.

The names of the retiring Committee were next read by the Secretary, together with that of Mr. D. Lewis (Brighton), and Mr. Cockram (Croydon) proposed, and Mr. Hart (Brighton) seconded that they should be re-elected for the ensuing year. Carried *nem con.*

MR. POLLINGTON: On this occasion I would like to take the opportunity myself of thanking subscribers for their continued confidence in the Committee. I would say for myself and on behalf of my colleagues, and I am sure that they will agree, “We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.” Nevertheless, we believe, and it is a humbling thought, that we have seen the Lord’s hand with us during the year, particularly in connection with the work of the Bethesda Fund. I have felt that these annual gatherings are very unique occasions, when there is such a great gathering of the Lord’s people, and I trust we have felt the Spirit with us even today, and this morning at the Prayer Meeting, particularly when we were singing that very beautiful hymn by Thomas Kelly (1021). Also, on behalf of the Committee, I would say how thankful we are that today, in spite of the difficulty of travel by rail, a large company has been able to gather together with us.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Hatton (Redhill) for the use of Gower Street Chapel, which was acknowledged by Mr. J. J. Rayner on behalf of the Gower Street pastor and church.

MR. POLLINGTON: I would just mention the work of the Gospel Standard Trust, and also remind you of the Annual General Meeting to be held on the 13th May, 1972, at 3 p.m. The work of the Trust has two aspects. One is in connection with the building of our chapels, and trusteeship. The Secretary of the Trust, Mr. Hart, is always very willing to give any help and assistance he can to any trustees or deacons of chapels who are in any difficulty. We have, we believe and hope, been helpful on a number of occasions, but, speaking for myself, one of the very heaviest and saddest things we have to deal with, is the closure of chapels (places

where once there was a faithful ministry) where now it appears that the Lord has no further use for them. I can assure you it is with very sad and heavy feelings that we have to decide, on the advice of the trustees, that chapels should be closed.

The other work, of course, is the Publications, which is quite well-known to you through the announcements month by month in the *Gospel Standard*. There is a circulation of books outside the denomination. For the first time in 1971 fresh ground has been broken in Papua, New Guinea, South Africa and Ghana. Also, the attention of the Vatican has apparently been drawn to our Publications, and Mr. Pearce received a letter from Professor Joseph Tylenda, of the Pontificio Instituto Biblico, Rome, asking for a copy of the latest catalogue indicating titles of books available. Mr. Pearce was able to furnish him with this, and also send him a copy of *The Dairyman's Daughter*. I commend to you the work of the Trust, particularly the Publications.

There is no report from the Gospel Standard Library, but I would like to take the opportunity of expressing our gratitude for the work of the new librarian, Mr. Legh Banfield, and the very great interest he takes in the work of the Library.

Hymn 833 was then sung

MR. GOSDEN: I should like to make just one or two observations upon the chapter that we read, 2 Thessalonians ii. The apostle, in his prayerful anxiety for the church, warns them here of the perilous times that shall be in the last days, the same as he did to Timothy. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." And there is a catalogue of the evils (and those last days are with us): "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy . . . traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"; and then that which is a very solemn evil in the religious world, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." And it gives the same warnings in this chapter down to the 13th verse.

I would, as helped, make a few remarks from the 13th verse. I thought, coming along this morning, passing through all the crowds, and the chaos, and the evils that abound, what a wonderful meeting we were coming to! And the apostle, after describing some of the evils and antichrists, comes to this: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren." I thought of this meeting, and the contrast, as those protests give evidence, and the terrible conditions in those two parts of the world—the profane world, and the professing world. "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren." I felt such a love to the people of God in looking at this little assembly which represents, as has been said, many of our churches. Not that the church of God can be circumscribed by a denomination—by no means. Peter has defined the boundary of the church of God: "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." But I do believe that our little denomination represents a people who are taught by the Holy Ghost, and are kept closer to the blessed doctrines of heaven than any other body.

"We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren." The excellent of the earth; the light of the world; the salt of the earth. It preserves the earth. If the whole of the people of God were taken from this earth, my friends, then the destruction that happened to Sodom and Gomorrah would descend on this world. It is for the elect's sake that the wicked are restrained. Micah says that the Lord's people are "in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord." It is at this point we may perhaps consider whether our personal lives, and our profession, are consistent with that description. Are we as the salt of the earth? Do we contribute anything to its preservation? Are we as lights in the world? Does our light so shine before men that they glorify God? Are we as dew from heaven among many people?

"We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." A beautiful expression, though simple. We read in the Epistle of John, "And we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This is the church of God. It is built upon Christ, the eternal Rock, and nothing can ever shake it. "Who (or what) can shake thy sure repose?"

I would just say a word on the 15th and last verses. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast." You see the strength upon which he gives this exhortation—"He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." He sets before them the glorious prospect—heaven itself—which enabled Moses to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." There is a ground for it. We want to look for a reason for the things that we declare and profess, otherwise there is no meaning in it. The reason why Moses made that gracious choice was because "he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." You will find, I think, the same reason in the Philippians: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." There is the reason for it in the close of the preceding chapter: "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught." It does not mean to say that we should hold fast a traditional religion, but those traditions are the blessed doctrines of the gospel embodied in our articles of faith, so that the exhortation is: Hold fast the form of sound words. "Therefore, brethren, stand fast." There is a great deal of drifting today. I know there is the terrible evil of the papacy—according to the Scripture, God will deal with that. There is modernism. But things come nearer than that, my friends. "Stand fast, and hold

the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

There are the doctrines of grace: the doctrine of the fall of man; the doctrine of the glorious Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; the blessed doctrine of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation, which is denied in the religious world today. How I have emphasized among my own people, and would here, that foundation doctrine—to hold fast the sacred sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus born of the virgin Mary; that sinless humanity, impeccable. It is that blessed contact that the Lord Jesus came and made with this earth, and by the work of the Holy Ghost in regeneration a union is made between Christ and His people, whereby they partake of Him. Hold fast the inspiration of the holy Scriptures.

Then he closed with a prayer for these beloved people: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation.” It would be absurd to use that term everlasting if there were not something commensurate with it, and that blessed thing is the Eternal God, the Eternal Son, the Eternal Holy Ghost. Otherwise nothing could be everlasting. Therefore, the inheritance of His dear people is an eternal inheritance.

Mr. J. Delves then addressed the meeting.

MR. J. DELVES: Dear Mr. Chairman and friends, It would have been far better for my brother to have continued, for he has far more grace and ability than his brother has. If I had not a place in many of your hearts, I could not venture to address you, for I have come under physical difficulties. It was several years ago that I last addressed you on a similar occasion to this, and it was from a word in Samuel: “Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow.” It has been all my salvation ever since the Lord blessed my soul in 1916. It is all my salvation today, and it will be all my salvation and all my desire when time shall be no more.

I endorse what my dear brother has said, and Mr. Pollington, about the sad days in which our lot is cast. They are profoundly solemn. As a nation, we have largely turned away from God, and from upright moral principles. It is a day of blasphemy and corruption, immorality, Sabbath-breaking, and many other evils. This makes us feel very much for our dear young people. They have my sympathies. I feel encouraged to see a good number of our dear young friends here today. May the Lord bless you and the Editor of your magazine, the *Friendly Companion*. I do hope you will read the profitable reading in its pages, and will keep to the old paths and walk therein, and as you may be helped by God’s

grace, to seek the Lord, and pray to Him to be your God, your Strength, your Stay. He can enable you to stand fast, as we have heard, in the face of the dreadful practices so evident in the day in which we live. The conditions that prevail bring us to feel the necessity more and more of real vital things in religion. In these days more than ever there is a tendency to depart from vital things in religion, and to substitute things that can soon become a snare. O what need we have to cleave to the truth, and to vital things, vital realities, for eternity looms ahead! Every one of us needs a religion that will stand on a dying bed.

In this connection, I have felt a Scripture on my mind in John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." If we come inside this verse and this chapter, we shall go to heaven. This is a very, very sacred portion of the Word of God. They are the Lord's own words, and they are profound. So are the chapters that precede this. When that noble, courageous Reformer, John Knox of Scotland, was near his end, he said to his wife, "Go, read where I first fixed my anchor," and she read the 17th chapter of John. I could not tell you how many times I have looked at that chapter, and asked the Lord to incorporate me in it. It is a profoundly sacred prayer. We have the will of Christ here in verse 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which thou hast given Me: for thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." If we have an interest in this chapter, in this prayer, our everlasting destiny is secure in Christ. It is profoundly sacred because of the Person who gave utterance to these words. It was the dear Redeemer Himself. "Never man spake like this Man," or prayed like this Man.

But not only is it the Person speaking, but the subject matter—how sacred it is! Sometimes to read a few verses may soften the heart, bring a little compunction, repentance, and hope of an interest in the precious truth. Then, think of what was just before Him. The agonies of Gethsemane, the cross, wounds, reproach, mockery, the shedding of His most precious blood.

"This is life eternal." Eternal life may be considered in three aspects. First of all in the eternal decrees of God in divine predestination, for everyone that was there predestinated was predestinated unto life eternal. Another feature of this involves His work of redemption. He suffered in great love and condescension, He came to complete that work of redemption, and He did; otherwise there could be no eternal life for a law-breaker. We have no hope worth having savingly unless that hope finds its centre in that word: "It is finished." I realize, dear friends, that the matters that have been brought before you concerning the Societies are important, and I believe they have been made a great blessing, but there is something more important than anything beside, and

that is to be right with God. *Eternal life may be said to centre in the wounds and blood of our incarnate God.* May we have the mind and conviction of the apostle when he said: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Sad to say, the blessed sin-atonement work of the Lord Jesus Christ is largely by-passed by many so called ministers in these days. May the Lord help us each one in our ministry, and my dear brethren here in the ministry, to preach the atonement, because life eternal is, as it were, procured and ratified in the finished work of our glorious and blessed Redeemer.

But there is a third point, and this is experimental. The experimental feature is in the verse I have read: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." So here, from this point of view, dear friends, eternal life centres in a knowledge of Christ. I cannot over-estimate the value of this. I think sometimes of a dear old friend of mine that I had in Brighton in my younger days. He said to me, "One day when I was walking along the Patcham Road, I got such a sight of Christ that when I see Him He will not be a stranger." I have never forgotten it. The dear old gentleman soon died, and went to heaven to see his Redeemer, not as a stranger. *We shall not enter heaven to live with Christ if He is a stranger to us down here.* "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God," and the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father in Christ.

And this is not a natural attainment; it is a spiritual knowledge by the saving teaching of the Holy Spirit in a poor sinner's soul. O it is a blessed knowledge! It is a knowledge that will take us to heaven; it is a revealed knowledge; it is saving; it is a knowledge of the glory of Christ in the glory of His eternal personality, and His blessed humanity. We have this in John chapter i: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." What glory? "The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Before I close, I do want to emphasize the vital necessity of the atonement, and of vital things in religion, particularly the wonders of redeeming grace and dying love in a once crucified Man. Now He is risen, exalted; He is the glory of heaven. Down in Sussex there was a godly pastor in my very early days, who was asked a question by a woman: Shall we know our relatives when we get to heaven? He said, "When I set my eyes on Him, I shall never want to look at any one else." I would just like to close these observations with two verses from Hymn 1156 that have often been very sweet to me. It is the last hymn in our hymn-book:

"What stream is that which sweeps away  
My sins just like a flood,  
Nor lets one guilty blemish stay?  
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.

“ What theme, my soul shall best employ  
 Thy harp before thy God,  
 And make all heaven to ring with joy?  
 'Tis Jesus' precious blood.”

After Hymn 18 had been sung, Mr. Gosden concluded with prayer.

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### SELF DETHRONED

*From the writings of Ralph Erskine*

If you should meet a man travelling upon the way and should ask him how many hours high the sun is, you need not marvel if, instead of looking up to the sun to see how high it is, he should look down at your shadow to see how short it is; for he can tell that way better than by looking upon the sun itself. Even so, if a man would judge how much of Christ is in him, the best way to try is rather to look downward than upward. Look in your heart and see what dash your pride hath got, and what abatement your corruption is brought under; for the shorter these dark shadows are in you, the higher is the Sun of righteousness.

Now the grand corruption of the heart of man, the great root-sin which sets itself against Christ as Lord, I will tell you what it is. It is that lord of all misrule—SELF. That is the lord that lords it over you, and all other sins are but the brats of Self; they are but sub-servants, under-servants to this great lord of self-love, self-pride and self-righteousness.

Now a true believer is righteous by the righteousness of another. He lives by the life of another. He is acted by the spirit of another. And therefore he of any man in the world should have least of self in him, because Christ as Lord doth absolutely set Himself against this great corruption. And therefore if you would know one excellent way of judging of Jesus Christ the Lord being in you, it is by the breaking and casting down of self. For the more full that a man is of self, the more empty is he of Christ; and the more full he is of Christ, the more empty he is of self; for the lord Self and the Lord Christ cannot stand together. The lordship of Christ and the lordship of self are inconsistent. When you receive the Lord Christ, then the lord Self is unthroned and thrown down.

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### LETTER BY JOHN TURTON

Dear Friend—Times without number have I intended to thank you for your letter of December 20th last which I appreciate as breathing the spirit of true faith and hope. To do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices the Lord is well pleased. He loves to see His children walking in love, and I am sure when that love is shed abroad in the heart, it does, as Mr. Hart said,

“ Make great obstructions small;  
 'Tis prayer, 'tis praise, 'tis sacrifice,  
 'Tis holiness, 'tis all!”

And did not Paul say so emphatically: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema"?

I have often been pulled up when apt to judge those who make a loud noise and glaring profession, parading brilliant gifts, and concluding from that their standing in Jesus. What a sad mistake! Broken hearts, contrite walkers, sin-stricken, sin-bitten, tried, tempted, harassed, emptied from vessel to vessel, in heaviness through manifold temptations—these are the characters who value the love, blood and power of Jesus, who through the gracious anointing of the Holy Spirit are led to see that exclusively in Jesus, and Jesus alone, is salvation. "Let the inhabitants of the Rock sing."

You ask how I am keeping. Well, in body I am really wonderfully well considering all I have gone through. I ought to be more grateful for bodily and temporal mercies. The Lord opens still a way, tries faith and patience. Many things I have to confess. Yesterday, particularly, I did feel a great, guilty sinner. My heart was pained and heavy. I longed for a touch of the Lord's forgiving mercy. I was restless in my spirit all day. I had been to Patricroft on the Sunday, and trust I can truly say the Lord's presence was felt in the services, and He guided me safely home by rail in the dark black-out. Then yesterday morning, such a heavy cloud enveloped my very soul, obscuring every evidence both in the private and individual experience of His love to my soul, and also obscuring every evidence of being really called to speak in His Name. I did get a little access last night when alone before God trying to confess guilt and worthlessness, pleading very brokenly, like the poor publican and in his language.

You know, my friend, there is a very solemn secret which the Lord mysteriously retains between His living family and Himself. No lion, or vulture, or unclean beast are privy to this secret. O, the sweetness of pardoning love and blood when applied to the heart and conscience! How safe does the soul feel to be from the enemy and avenger! How happy, humble, loving, submissive when such seasons are given! This is the *little touch* which you refer to in your letter. This is how the Father pities His children.

I do hope the Lord will be with us as a nation in our trouble. True, we do not deserve it. How godless, infidel and apostate we are! He feeds us, provides our necessities; our ships are guided to our ports laden with stores of requirements. His voice speaks in a thousand ways, and yet the nation, like the deaf adder, stops its ears. Truly it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed. My heart is so heavy and sad at times that I can scarcely express my feelings. But may we be helped to remember that in the midst, and over, and above all, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Singular, your letter had been lost, and now, on finding it, a little fire began to burn on perusing its contents. "Cast thy bread upon the waters."

When it is well with you, kindly remember

Yours sincerely,

Warrington, February 6th, 1940

J. Turton

## **J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES**

### **VI. The Importance of Unity in Church Decisions**

*A query was sent to Mr. Philpot concerning a church meeting, called to consider inviting a minister to preach regularly. As the voting was equally divided, the case was settled by the casting vote of the chairman. The question was: Has a chairman such a right? In answering, Mr. Philpot deals with the wider issue—unity in the church of God.*

Being in total ignorance both of the parties and the circumstances mentioned in the above enquiry beyond what is above stated, our answer will at least have the advantage of impartiality, if it lack every other requisite.

Assuming then that the circumstances are correctly given (for we must bear in mind that there are usually two sides to a question), we may view the matter under two lights—the letter and the spirit.

We are, of course, ignorant of the rules of the church; but as long as voting is practised—and it is hard to see how it can always be dispensed with—it is a case which should be provided for beforehand, and the church should know whether, where voices are equal, the chairman has a casting vote in addition to his own. If the church has such a rule, the chairman might without violating church order avail himself of it; and if there were no such rule, the analogy of other meetings, in which the chairman has usually a casting vote, might be alleged as a sufficient vindication of his conduct.

But law is one thing and gospel another. A man may act according to the strict letter, and so far be decidedly right, and yet may in so doing violate the spirit, and so be decidedly wrong. "All things are lawful for me," says the apostle, "but all things are not expedient." It is not well in churches that desire to walk in the fear of the Lord that there should be any of this trial of strength, this close voting, this carrying matters by dint of a small majority.\* When such an important matter as inviting a minister to preach for so long was brought before the church, it was not well, we think,

\*We feel most strongly that in any important matter in the church of God, "the mind of the Spirit" must be sought. What is the Lord's will in the matter? Vital issues in the church of God are not to be governed by majority decisions. How often we have found, when there is a difference of opinion, that if the matter is deferred for a few weeks and earnest prayer is made to discern the Lord's will, there is complete agreement when the decision is finally taken.

so to decide the matter. Even allowing the chairman had a right to the casting vote, it was rather a stretch of authority to avail himself of it. What would be the probable effect of this forced decision on the minds of the minority? Most likely to render them permanently discontented, prejudice them against the minister so forced on them, and alienate their affections from their fellow members. The victory would be dearly gained at such a price, and the chairman, if a gracious man, might have preferably accepted defeat. How uncomfortable a position too for the minister—to be carried, as it were, thus into the pulpit, much as a successful candidate at an election for a member of Parliament. We can hardly think he would thank the chairman for his casting vote; but would rather say, "O let me go rather than be a source of strife. How can I preach peace when I have been the cause of war, and recommend brotherly love and union when I only occupy the pulpit by the casting vote of the chairman, which I see has caused such division?"

But leaving this part of the subject, which is much of a private nature, we wish to drop a few hints which may be of more general importance. Our own view is that there should be as little voting as possible in a church, there being no more fruitful source of strife and contention, and no more certain means of splitting it into parties.

For peace's sake therefore it is eminently desirable that candidates should not be brought before the church concerning whose reception there may be a question; that ministers should not be invited to supply the pulpit who are not fully and generally received; and that matters should not be brought forward concerning which there is likely to be dispute. This, what we may perhaps call "preliminary wisdom," is indispensably necessary in those with whom mainly rests the government of the church, as the pastor and deacons, in order that a church may enjoy that choice blessing, inward harmony, union and peace. There is a general complaint of strife and division in the churches, and we fear there is too much ground for belief that this complaint is true. But we believe that much of this lamentable spirit may be traced up to the pastor and officers of the church. If they are not blessed with meekness and wisdom; if they are guided and actuated by a narrow or party spirit; if they seek not the profit of the church but some miserable, petty ends of their own; if they court the rich and respectable and despise the poor and needy; if they will not bend their will to the will of the church, but will attempt to rule with a rod of iron, imitating therein the false shepherds (Ezek. xxxiv. 4), they must be prepared for the almost certain consequences—strife and ill-will. "He that ruleth over men," it was said to the sweet psalmist of Israel by the Rock of Israel, "must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord"; and where this is not the case, disunion must follow.

## A FRIENDLY HINT CONCERNING THE HOUSE OF GOD

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The great Jehovah, from His glorious throne,  
Stoops down to make His love and mercy known;  
And bids the chosen tribes of Israel meet,  
Where He reveals the glories of His feet.

He sends His heralds forth in Jesus' Name,  
To publish peace and pardoning love proclaim;  
Yea, He goes with them, and applies His Word,  
And makes it life and health and joy afford.

Where then is that ungrateful sinner found,  
Who slights and disregards the gospel's sound?  
Who, when Jehovah in His courts draws near,  
Neglects within those holy courts t' appear?

Can those who once have tasted Jesus' grace,  
Choose to be absent when He shows His face?  
Shall a few drops of rain, or dirty road,  
Prevent their public intercourse with God?

Shall gossip calls, or some inferior thing  
Detain, when summoned by the King of kings?  
Blush, brethren, at the God-insulting thought!  
And prove in conduct you are better taught.

Remember every time the house of prayer  
Is open for the saints, the Lord is there,  
To hold communion with the heaven-born race,  
And give them from His fulness grace for grace.

Let not such sacred seasons be forgot—  
Say to each worldly care, "Detain me not!  
A feast is held, and I must share a part:  
I'll not be robbed, nor grieve my pastor's heart."

See, Satan's slaves to scenes of riot go,  
By day and night, through rain, or hail, or snow!  
And shall some visitor or worldly care  
Detain believers from the house of prayer?

Forbid it, Lord, revive Thy people's zeal,  
The lukewarm plague among Thy people heal;  
Ye heirs of bliss, whom Jesus often meets;  
Whene'er His house is open, fill your seats.

Jehovah loves the temple of His grace  
More than the tents of all His chosen race;  
Blest is the man whose seeking spirit waits  
On all the means of grace in Zion's gates.

Bear with me, while I say the crime is great  
Of those who practise coming very late,  
As if God's service were by far too long,  
And they omit the first and closing song.

Shall pew doors rattle, hats and patters move,  
To show how you the service disapprove?  
Disturbing those who come to praise the Lord,  
And even while they listen to His Word?

A little less indulgence in the bed—  
 A little more contrivance in the head—  
 A little more devotion in the mind—  
 Would quite prevent your being so behind!

Suppose an earthly prince should condescend  
 To bid you to his banquet as a friend,  
 Would you not try all means within your power  
 To be in court at the appointed hour?

Shall such attention to a worm be given,  
 And be refused to the God of heaven?  
 Who can expect to be by Jesus blest,  
 If absent when He comes to meet His guests?

O what a pleasing sight it would afford  
 If, when the clerk says, "Let us praise the Lord,"  
 Each seat were occupied, and all the throng  
 Were waiting to unite in their first song!

My brethren, this might mostly be the case  
 If we were lively in the Christian race;  
 Then every hindrance would be laid aside,  
 To see and hear of Jesus crucified.

If you complain you have so far to come,  
 Set out a little sooner from your home;  
 But those who dwell hard by have no excuse,  
 Except in idleness, or sleep, or use.

I grant, lest I should seem to be severe,  
 There are domestic cases here and there:  
 Age—illness—service—things quite unforseen,  
 To censure which I surely do not mean.

But such will not (unless I greatly err)  
 Among the prudent very oft occur.  
 And when they do, you surely should endeavour  
 To come at last: 'tis better late than never!

Joseph Irons (1785-1852)

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### OBITUARY

**William E. Relfe**, deacon for many years at Ebenezer Chapel, Hastings, died on December 2nd, 1971, aged 71.

He was first brought to think about death and eternity when, as a boy, a very heavy ceiling fell down over him in bed, yet left him unhurt. He was much blessed under the preaching of his pastor, Mr. Robert Brooker, when 15 years old. Of this he wrote in 1918:

"This is the anniversary of that day, 17th October, 1915, when the Lord so blessed my soul such as I had never before under Mr. Brooker from Psalm xci, the last three verses. O what a day that was to me! I don't think I shall ever forget it as long as my senses remain. I have always looked upon that as the time when I received the witness of the Holy Ghost, and if ever I have had it, it was then."

Many years later he again wrote of this occasion:

"I come now to a time of great blessing, but how shall I record the wonderful goodness of God to me, one so poor and vile and wretched? As I was writing the date, it suddenly darted into my mind that this was an anniversary time to me, and my mind was immediately led back to the time 42 years ago, when I was only 15, when that dear servant of God,

the late Mr. Robert Brooker, preached from Psalm xci. 14-16 (the actual date was October 17th, 1915). It was then, when if ever I have done so, that I humbly hope I was blessed with a measure of assurance that heaven would be my portion at last. How kind and gracious of God to bring this to my remembrance! I was favoured with sweet meditation, and felt that I knew something about the fulfilment of that promise, particularly the last sentence, 'And shew him My salvation.' The next Wednesday (October 16th, 1957), the text was, 'And they sang a new song.' I felt a sweet hope within that I should one day be found among that happy throng and join in their praises, as dear Kent expressed it :

'My soul anticipates the day,  
Would stretch her wings and fly away ;  
To aid the song—a palm to bear—  
And bow, the chief of sinners, there.'

The following are extracts from his diary :  
*March 14th, 1918.*

" 'The old man struggles hard to gain  
The conquest over grace,  
And oft the field he seems to gain,  
When Jesus hides his face.'

That verse describes the condition of my soul. There seems to be a continual conflict between the powers of sin and grace, if I have any ; and I hope I have a little, for I believe it is true as Daniel Herbert says in that same hymn ; 'The old man would not plague us thus, If grace were absent there.' But alas, how often does the old man seem to get the better of me! O that I could be free from sin!

'My grief, my burden, long has been  
Because I could not cease from sin.'

But what a mercy it is that I have a hope that one day it will be well with me (as I was reading in Newton at teatime today):

'One sight of Jesus as He is  
Will strike all sin for ever dead.'

O what must it be to be there, to be for ever with Christ, to be like Him and to be free from sin?"

*January 1st, 1925.* "Truly God has been good to me today. It is a very rough night, and while thinking on that, I thought of that dark and doleful night when Christ suffered in the garden, and I had a sweet hope spring up that it was for me. The feeling was very sweet while it lasted. O that I could love Him more and serve Him better!"

*March 13th, 1939.* "I often fear lest my knowledge in the head should prove a snare to me, but I do want to be kept from self-deception and to have a real heart work, a real religion that will do to live by and to die by. I feel more and more that only one thing can do me the good I need, and that is sovereign mercy ; my sins are so great, so many and so powerful. O that God would subdue the awful power of sin in my heart!"

*January, 1958.* "At the ordinance, I had a sweet touch of the love of Christ. How often, alas, I have come to the table so formal, so unconcerned, and have gone away in the same condition. During the previous service I had given out hymn 1123, and as I received the bread, the third verse came so sweetly to my mind :

'To suffer in the traitor's place.  
To die for man, amazing grace!  
Yet pass rebellious angels by—  
O why for man, dear Saviour, why?'

particularly the last line; and that was further enlarged to, 'Why pass by millions of men and set Thy love on me? Why me, why me, O blessed

God, Why such a wretch as me?' How black my sins appeared! That sweet hymn of Swain's (162) came to my mind. O how precious Jesus was to me for a few moments! and I had a sweet hope that the last four lines of the hymn were true in respect of sinful me."

*March 4th, 1964.* "For some time I had been feeling to be in a very far off condition with little desire after the best things, yet not feeling satisfied with my state. In this state I entered hospital (January 29th) and continued for a few days with very little concern as to how near I had been brought to death.

"However, on the Sunday morning I was reading (in a magazine) the preface to the third volume of Daniel Herbert's hymns, where he writes of the unchangeable love of God, and quotes from Dr. Hawker: 'I will never, no never, forsake thee.' This broke into my soul in such a wonderful manner and I felt my interest in this precious promise, and then the second verse of hymn 412:

' In every state secure,  
Kept as Jehovah's eye.  
'Tis well with them while life endure,  
And well when called to die,'

came so sweetly that I was enabled to rest there, and felt that living or dying, all would be well. I was favoured to meditate on this word and to feel such a spirit of calm which continued for several days.

"Towards the end of the week, the devil was permitted to try me. (Yes, I know it was him!) He told me that the blessing was not preceded with a spirit of repentance and confession as it should have been from my far off state. This was true. I had not felt any special repentance and confession before (but it was accompanied with these gifts). O how it made me long for a confirmation, which the Lord was pleased to give!

"I had been reading Samuel's *Triumph of the Holy Spirit* on Sunday morning. I felt a suggestion to turn back to what I had read a day or so ago, where he writes of the feeling of the blessings in Christ and in the gospel. As I read it, it was sealed home to my poor soul that these were all mine, and I felt as I had never been able to do so before. I could truly use the language of verse 3, hymn 667: 'And matchless grace has made that treasure mine.' I could have called out in the hospital (but did not), 'It's mine! it's mine!'

"What a wonderful favour it is when the Lord comes so unexpectedly to one so unworthy, and one is favoured to prove, as Hart expresses it:

' Jesus appears, disproves the lie,  
And kindly makes it o'er again!'

I had not had such a blessing since my early days, when I was much favoured."

*Note by his pastor, Mr. D. Housden:*

Our friend had a lifetime association with Ebenezer, Hastings, having been there from infancy. He was baptized by Mr. R. Brooker when a young man. It appears that at that time he was favoured with a faith's view of the Lord Jesus suffering. He would often speak of this in prayer and quote hymn 704, verse 3;

" Make Thy mighty wonders known,  
Let us see Thy sufferings plain,  
Let us see Thee sigh and groan,  
Till we sigh and groan again."

The things of eternity weighed heavy upon him. His end was as sudden as unexpected. He was for upwards of 50 years a pharmacist in the town, well known and respected. His pastor conducted the funeral service in the presence of many friends. "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men."

**David Harold Gurney**, member and deacon of the church at Zoar Chapel, Varden Street, Whitechapel, died on February 3rd, 1972, aged 82.

The Lord began a work of grace in his soul in 1908 when, one Sabbath afternoon, the line was sung: "And live as we should wish to die." He felt the words laid with much weight on his mind and a solemn conviction that he was unprepared for eternity. With it came a feeling of guilt which brought him to confess his sin and beg for mercy. The prayer was with him day and night: "Create in me a clean heart, O God." A godly separation from the world followed as the emptiness and vanity of the world was felt; death was now upon things which were acceptable before. Also there was a felt love to the people of God, yet still the heavy burden on his conscience and heart.

His deliverance was brought about in this way:

"Continually I waited at the throne of grace, but nothing I could do would remove my guilt; nothing whatever would relieve me from what I felt within. There was no help from any creature means, I could accomplish nothing myself to bring about a change in my feelings, or obtain a release from the burden of my heart, but it pleased the Lord, I trust, in His own way and in His own time, to do His own work, and after leading me in this path for some months, teaching me my weakness, my sinnership, and my lost and ruined condition before Him, He graciously opened to my soul the way of escape by leading my mind to that precious hymn of Hart's on the brazen serpent. I trust He enabled me to see at Calvary that blessed remedy which I felt to need, and His gracious Spirit revealed to me that Christ died for my sins. The last verse of the hymn especially came to the mind and to the heart, bringing, I hope, absolute and complete release from the sin and guilt on my soul, and the death which I had been carrying for so long. I hope the gracious Spirit applied these words and opened them up to me:

' See the Lord of Glory dying,  
See Him gasping, hear Him crying,  
See His burdened bosom heave;  
Look, ye sinners, ye who hung Him,  
See how deep your sins have stung Him,  
Dying sinner, look and live,'

and I trust I was enabled to see the Lord Jesus Christ as hanging on Calvary to remove my guilt and my sin. By the gracious application of the truth of it, sin and guilt and death were removed. The burden was gone, as Bunyan so blessedly states in the journey of the pilgrim. 'When he got to the cross the burden fell from off his shoulders,' and this I hope in my small measure was what I felt and experienced of the death of Christ. I felt then all was life and light and liberty and the knowledge of Christ, and I felt a readiness even then to depart and be with Him, and felt before God I was ready to die, and, if it was His will, to step just over the stream into a blessed eternity. However, it was not the Lord's will, although there was a willingness and a complete separation from this world at that time. These lines were very precious: 'In Him there dwells a treasure all divine, And matchless grace has made that treasure mine.' I could indeed feel that before God. Many other precious hymns in our book were made good to me, that one of Toplady's particularly, 'A debtor to mercy alone, Of covenant mercy I sing.' These days were indeed happy days to me. The Sun shone, and I could praise the Lord and sing His praises."

At this time he was attending the chapel at Eastbourne and found Mr. Bradford's preaching to be most profitable. Feeling like the blind man who, when his eyes were opened, followed Jesus in the way, he was constrained to do the same, and was baptized in March, 1910, at Grove Road Chapel, Eastbourne.

Good books were now his delight, especially the sermons of J. C. Philpot. He describes how he was clearly led into the doctrine of election: "I had obtained a book of sermons of Mr. Philpot. I had now a fresh

clean appetite for reading good books. I had had to come away from reading light literature. It was now the truth of God I desired and I had this volume of dear Philpot's sermons; and one sermon especially, I hope and trust, the Lord used to establish me a little in the truth. The text was: 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God,' etc. In the first part of the sermon he opened up the truth of the doctrine of election, and I could see it as I never saw it before, and the Lord used it to teach me the blessedness of this precious truth. The Lord had eternally elected His people whom He loved from all eternity, whom He died to save and redeem, and I received the truth in the love of it. The latter part of the sermon more particularly dealt with the experience of those elected souls, and I felt in a small measure at least the Lord had led me in the same path of things, to receive these truths, and the marks and evidences that Philpot brought forth, I felt the Lord had graciously given to me, not perhaps to the great extent with which some are favoured, but I did feel the Lord had given me a gracious hope that I was among the elect. That was indeed Good Friday to me. (It was Good Friday, 1910.)

"It was some time after this He graciously favoured me to know more, particularly in this way. One morning, hymn 201 was graciously applied, and was made sweet and precious ('Grace! 'tis a charming sound'), and especially this verse: 'Grace first inscribed my name,' etc. It appeared to me as though I could look back into eternity and see there the hand of Free Grace writing my name in the book of life, and at Free Grace's elbow (as it were) stood the Lamb of God as Surety for the sinner whose name was then being inscribed."

Later, concerning the trial of faith, he wrote:

"But time went on, and the days of darkness came. Once especially I was brought into such darkness and fear that I should prove to be a hypocrite, and I got into a very low and dried up condition. I tried to beg of the Lord to make known His mercy again, and I hope He graciously heard me in this way, by graciously applying these words, "How shall I give thee up?" "'Tis Jesus speaks the word." I felt a renewing of those precious truths, and so I trust the Lord led me along, here a little, and there a little, and I came to learn more and more that sin was in me, and a deceitful heart which we could in no wise make clean, and though the Lord gives a new nature, there is still the old nature. Sometimes I got very low and very dark, and hardly knew where I was, but the Lord gave me a little light on the matter and showed me that my frames and feelings were not my salvation. While attending at the Dicker one Sabbath morning, this hymn was given out, and it read my case, like one coming with a light and shining it in the dark. It showed that the way was right—hymn 614: 'The Lord the righteous tries.' The Lord showed me that He was leading me, to teach me there was no help in self, not even in frames and feelings. I could see plainly then: 'I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name.' I could say, I hope, He was all my salvation and my safety was in Him."

*Note by Mr. J. S. Green*

Our friend was for many years a loyal supporter of our little denomination. The last six months of his life he attended Gower Street Memorial Chapel. He was able to speak in prayer a few times and his prayers revealed a gracious exercise. Towards the end of his life, his mind failed very much; though he could not speak at the end, he appeared very quiet and peaceful. He was laid to rest in the Great Northern Cemetery, New Southgate, London.

**Miriam Clara House**, a member since 1926 of the church at Providence, Forest Hill, London, died on the 21st January, 1972, aged 86 years.

Born at Longstanton, Cambridgeshire, her parents were members at Oakington Strict Baptist Chapel, her father being a deacon there for several years before his death. (See *G.S.* July 1934: Mrs. Jane Crisp.)

Brought up under the sound of the truth, she had serious thoughts as a child, and as she grew up found she could not enjoy the things of the world as others.

Writing of a trial which lasted four years, she says the Lord answered her prayers and brought her through, and she had a good hearing under a sermon preached by Mr. Medhurst at Tamworth Road, Croydon, from: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," and she felt He had done great things for her. Soon after this, while on a visit to her home, for three weeks she felt the Lord's sweet presence, at the end of which these words were sweetly spoken to her: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." This promise helped her throughout her pilgrimage.

After her marriage, my mother came to London to live, and attended the Foresters' Hall, Forest Hill. During the building of Providence Chapel, she felt such a love to the people and felt she could make her spiritual home with them there. In 1926, when Mr. May was supplying the pulpit with a view to the pastorate, she was one day thinking on various trials besetting her, when she says, "A voice said to me so plainly, 'You have to come before the church.' It was so real; I said aloud, 'Lord, how can I come? I have nothing to come with.'" But during the next nine days the Lord made her sins such a burden to her that she not only felt herself a sinner, but a lost one with no hope, expecting to die and drop into hell. At the end of this time, feeling so weak, she went into her room, and begged of the Lord to have mercy before it was too late. She says, "Instead of hell He brought me heaven. My burden rolled off and I came out of that room with my load of guilt gone, and felt so peaceful. Mr. May's ministry was made a great blessing to me for three Sundays in succession, especially the last, from 1 Kings viii. 57, 58. He ended by saying, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned!'" This constrained her to come before the church. Mr. May had asked the Lord that if it was right for him to accept the pastorate at Forest Hill, someone should be constrained to join the church. This prayer was answered by the coming forward of my mother, and she was baptized and received into the church by Mr. May.

She had many trials during her pilgrimage, having an invalid husband and four young children to care for, but had many remarkable deliverances both in providence and grace. At one time, when feeling heavily burdened, these words came softly to her:

"Fear thou not, distressed believer;  
Venture on His mighty name;  
He is able to deliver,  
And His love is still the same.  
Can His pity or His power  
Suffer thee to pray in vain?  
Wait but His appointed hour,  
And thy suit thou shalt obtain."

That evening this was the first hymn given out at the prayer meeting. She felt that instead of an angry God, He was just the reverse, and felt such love and peace the world knows nothing of.

During the summer of 1971 she was taken to hospital after haemorrhage from an ulcer, but was mercifully restored. These words were sweet to her on entering hospital:

"The Saviour, whom I then shall see,  
With new admiring eyes,  
Already has prepared for me  
A mansion in the skies."

After her death several hymns were found marked in her book relating to death and heaven.

In her last days she suffered from a gangrenous leg which was am-

puted below the knee, and later above the knee. From the commencement of this illness she was sorely tried by Satan, but had to plead her promise: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." She was comforted by the words: "There is a great Physician near." When told she was to have her leg amputated, these words came powerfully to her:

"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow,  
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress."

She felt Satan was put to flight, and said she was made willing to part with all, including her children.

The family have lost a praying mother and grandmother, and the church a mother in Israel. The funeral was conducted by Mr. J. Delves.

K.R.H.

*Note by Mr. J. Delves*

I feel it a privilege to add a note to the above account of our late dear friend. Three points are observable in reflecting upon one who very commendably held fast the profession of her faith and endured to the end. 1. There is a clear evidence of *real* things in her spiritual experience when, fearing she was a lost soul, she says, 'Instead of hell He brought me heaven.' 2. Her devotion and loyalty to the cause at Providence was very marked over a period of many years, and her care for the sanctuary of God in various practical ways. It can truly be said of her: 'Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth.' 3. In the midst of trial and affliction was a meek and quiet walk proving The eternal God to be her refuge and underneath the everlasting arms.

May the Lord sanctify the loss of a devoted, loyal and praying member.

**Harry Beighton**, for 51 years an honourable member, and for 28 years a gracious deacon, at Masborough Strict Baptist Chapel, Rotherham, died on the 14th March, 1972, aged 75 years.

During his early years he attended the local Church of England. His connection with the Strict Baptists commenced when he attended a Sunday School Anniversary Service with a friend, when it is believed the Lord began a work of grace in his heart and he continued to attend the services regularly.

He was baptized by Mr. Clayton on January 2nd, 1921, and appointed a deacon in December, 1944. He manifested a humble gracious spirit, walking in the fear of the Lord. His prayers were very real and revealed a deep desire to be found right in God's sight. Often he would pray that he might be found washed in the precious blood of Christ. Truly he was a pillar in the little church and his fellow deacon has spoken of him as a "brother beoved."

It is felt that for the last few years the Lord has been gradually taking down his clay tabernacle and preparing him for heaven. During the latter months of his life he was much tempted to doubt, and he had many fears lest he should come short. He was much in prayer, the burden of which was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He was favoured to be in the Lord's House on his last Sabbath here below, which was the 12th March, when he attended the morning service but was too ill to go in the afternoon. On the following Tuesday evening, he asked his wife to read to him from 1 Samuel i. 24-28, after which he engaged in prayer. A few moments later he lay back and almost without a sigh died, and we believe his redeemed spirit took its place before the throne. "Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his."

On Friday, 17th March, Mr. H. Jackson took the funeral service in the chapel, and Mr. W. Wise at the graveside. W.W.



# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

JULY, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## MEDITATION ON PSALM XLV

*By John Warburton the younger (1815-1892)*

“My heart is inditing a good matter.” The psalmist felt this sacred matter in his heart; in the margin it is “bubbleth up.” It was the operation of the Spirit in him that produced this good matter. The psalmist says his heart is doing what the Spirit is doing in his heart. When the Spirit works, He works by the heart, for He lays hold upon all its affections; every fibre of it is bent to His will. “He that believeth on Me,” says the Saviour, “out of his belly (his mind) shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive.” The flowing of waters signifieth the plentifulness of spiritual influences with which believers shall be supplied, whether joy, knowledge, spiritual gifts, or graces.

“Touching the King”; and yet some of the Psalm concerns the queen (the church), and virgins (young converts). We learn this from it: that whatever relates to Him, relates to His family. Christ and His family are one. He accounts Himself one with them. His glory He gives unto them. Injuries done to them are done to Him. Kindness done to them is done to Him.

How wonderfully sweet to have an experience of oneness with the Son of God! No mercy like this. No blessing equal to it for a moment. Oh, my soul, consider the dignity, the inconceivable favour of being co-partner with Christ. This is the saint’s honour: to be united in the bond of peace, which is the blood of Christ, having made peace by the blood of His cross. His Spirit, by inhabiting the mind, destroys the enmity of the mind, that now being reconciled, “we are made partakers of Christ.” The saints have a right to Christ.” He is theirs and that for ever—no separating them. “He is in them.” He lives in them. He dwells in their hearts. We observe, it is said, “We are made partakers”; that implies that there was a time when they were not manifestedly partakers of Christ. We were not born partakers of Christ. It is our new birth privilege, and a blessed one it is. Our deliverance out of trouble, and support in trouble, springs from this living union. Every one of the saints will come out of his troubles, yea, and out of all his fears, darkness, and distress. The Head is gone before; the members are sure to follow.

Then *verse 2*, the super-excellency of the dear Redeemer: “Thou art fairer than the children of men.” All the beauty of heaven and earth concentrate in Him. God is the beauty of

heaven; and the beauty of earth is man in a state of holy innocence. Both meet in Christ, the God-man. Nothing more fair, more beautiful to faith than Christ in His passion. Isaiah having a glimpse thereof is in raptures, and cries out, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." The mighty One, marching in great stateliness, going forth conquering and to conquer. He travailed for His people in sufferings, staining all His raiment in His own blood. Lovely, far beyond expression, to behold this fair One treading in the wine-press of the wrath of God, coming to one's soul, having salvation, procured by the shedding of His own blood. He travels in His people in the mighty power of His grace, overcoming every adverse power of sin in them, humbling the soul into the dust of self-abasement before Him, raising it up from fear and guilt to a sweet hope in His mercy. He travels to His people in the might of His power, as displayed in divine providence, crushing and confounding the schemes of enemies, and to admiration brings about His thoughts of love, and the fulfilment of the wishes and prayers of His people, often working in a dark cloud that His hand is not seen. He is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.

But, notwithstanding the exceeding beauty of Jesus, He is to thousands as a "root out of a dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness." The world, profane or professing, sees no beauty in Him; they thrust Him away; they do not desire the knowledge of His ways. Christ's beauties are seen of none but those that are inwardly acquainted with them. Now if Christ is precious to my soul, then I have the witness in me that I am the subject of divine teaching. For all called by grace, God will reveal His Son in them. To those that believe, He is precious.

Another thing that has been sweet to my soul in meditation is the loveliness and beauty of Christ being by imputation put upon each believer so that they who were ugly and black by sin, by grace are made as fair, comely, and beautiful as the blessed Redeemer. "Thy beauty was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon Thee, saith the Lord God." "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

"Grace is poured into Thy lips; therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever." Blessed be His precious Name, my soul is a living witness of this. Oh, the many times He has dropped the word of His grace into my heart. The first word of grace He spoke to my soul was the word of life, yea, eternal life. "I saw thee polluted in thine own blood; I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." God acts in sovereignty in letting His elect lie in their blood as long as He pleases. Abraham was 75 years old when God spake to him, called him out of his country and

sinful condition. There is nothing in the creature to move God to show mercy: "When thou wast in thy blood," in thy sin, ah! red with sin, "I said unto thee, Live." Oh, word of grace conveying eternal life to the soul! That life is nourished in the words of faith and of good doctrine.

None but God can speak a word to the heart; the words of man die on the ear. When God speaks, the doctrine of election, justification, and the invitations, promises, and encouragements of the gospel drop as the rain to nourish faith and hope, and distil as the dew to refresh the spirit. Grace is, indeed, poured into His lips. That grace He will not pour but into empty vessels, vessels of mercy, made to see and feel their deep soul-emptiness and poverty. "He is blessed for ever." The endowments of the Man Christ Jesus are given Him of the Father that by Him and in Him His people may be blessed with all spiritual blessings.

*Verses 3, 4, 5.* There is a wish breathed forth for an enlargement of the Saviour's kingdom. The psalmist longed for the Redeemer to go forth in the display of His mighty power, mighty to save, mighty in love. It is the Word of truth, the sword of the Spirit, that wins Him renown and dominion. Saints love to see the Beloved of their souls go forth in habiliments of glory befitting His eternal honour. Those who by faith have seen Him in garments of humiliation and of suffering rejoice to see the altogether lovely One advancing in acts of grace, in the vestments of glory, setting up His kingdom in the hearts of His chosen ones, the King of grace to be set upon the throne of the heart, causing sinners to submit themselves unto obedience to Him and unto His sceptre, and His Word and Spirit. This is the kingdom of God, which consisteth in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—and will terminate in the eternal salvation of believers, to the praise of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In *verses 6, 7, 8*, there is a delineation of His throne and sceptre; His holiness, righteousness, and superiority, with the fragrance of His garments and His work. It is God reigning in Christ the psalmist's eye of faith is so intently fixed upon. No object in heaven or upon earth to equal this. I am a poor, frail sinner, sinning in all I do. God is holy, and cannot look upon sinners but with detestation. The throne of grace presents God reconciled, God pacified, God satisfied, God honoured in the obedience of Christ, God our Saviour. Oh, sweet mercy! of His kingdom there will be no end. Unto that throne sinners may go to unburden their minds, leave their sorrows there, and draw grace from the mercy seat to enrich, enliven, and rejoice the soul. He, as Mediator, is anointed with the oil of gladness, and with that sacred unction He anoints the hearts of His sorrowful ones, for He gives the oil of joy for mourning. Oh, sweet, lovely Jesus! more precious than the rarest spices! A sight of His glory will make poor exiles sing and rejoice in hope of their eternal emancipation.

*Verse 9.* Virgin souls allured by grace, the church's maids of honour, are spoken of. The lowly and pure in heart are esteemed of the Lord. He looks upon them as His most familiar friends. See in what holy esteem the psalmist holds true converts, real saints. King's daughters, exalted and distinguished above and from others—not by dignity of natural birth, the empty vain and pompous boast of thousands, forgetting that themselves are only flesh and blood, the subjects of sin, liable to every disease, exposed to every temptation, and at last will fall into death; then all distinctions will end of a temporal nature—but raised up with Christ, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.”

What wonderful grace and goodness of the Lord in this business, that He is pleased so highly to advance and honour us! That such poor, unworthy, vile sinners should be made not only near God, but that we should be one in God, in the Father, and in the Son! This is not “the manner of men.” Can God and Christ be separated? No, never. Then mark, it is impossible that believers can be separated from Christ. How strange it would sound were it to be said, The Father may go one way, the Son another, and believers another! When God and Christ are rent asunder, each from the other, believers shall be rent asunder from them both. This is the height of all dignity. “Upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.” Not a queen, but *the* queen, the *only* queen. Who is she? It is Hephzibah, for the Lord delighteth in her. The church is the wife of the King, the beloved of His heart; she shall share His crown, His throne, His honour, His glory, His love, righteousness, riches and happiness.

*Verse 10.* She is addressed as the daughter of the King: “Incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.” The eye must be turned from every other object; Christ must be valued above all, and esteemed far above angels or men. To a believer Christ is everything. Suppose one to be invited to an entertainment, and hope be held out of meeting one most dear to him in all the world, and in whose society he was always happy, but from some cause that friend was absent; the entertainment itself would be a mere blank. Just so is it with Christ and believers. With Christ they are comfortable. If He smile they smile. If He bless they are happy. If He is found of them, who is happier than they? If they find Him not, who more disconsolate?

*Verse 11.* “So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him.” What beauty is there to be seen externally? In the eleventh of Hebrews we have an account of many precious souls, but nothing comely outside. “They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” This beauty is not in a fair countenance, nor proportionate body, nor natural, nor acquired abilities of the

mind; no, nor yet in any natural endowments; nor in strict morality. There may be all this to the admiration of fellow mortals, but in the sight of God it is nothing better than "whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." The Lord does not judge after "the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears." That is, He regards not the outside, but the heart. The fear of God in the heart, that is the beauty God regards. Himself is the perfection of beauty; if there be no likeness of Himself there can be no beauty. The new man is said to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him." The new man may be bowed down under a cross, hidden under dark clouds of sorrow, in the dust of self-abasement, in the vale of poverty, deserted of all. Still it is beauty, beauty in tears, beauty in sorrow. This beauty will attract the compassionate Saviour; His heart will be set upon it, and to that soul He will discover Himself. The church will reverence Jesus, and bow before Him in prostrate adoration; His yoke of worship is easy to the new man.

*Verse 12.* "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat Thy favour." This is a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. The line of truth went forth from the apostles through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. The Redeemer must see of the travail of His soul. The blessed Saviour had His eye on this portion of Scripture when He went into the coast of Tyre and Sidon. "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts"; with all that is related there (Matt. xv. 21-28). She that in her natural state was but a Gentile dog, but coming in much sorrow to the Saviour, and in faith crying after Him, appeared in the compassionate eye of the King amiable. She gave Him her heart, a present much desired by Him. And He gave her the full desire of her soul. Thus, as it was declared of Him, He gave "beauty for ashes." And that beauty He esteems. The Gentiles shall come to the light of the gospel, and kings, made so by the grace of God, to the brightness of the rising of the Sun of righteousness. All the elect, of whatever nation, kindred, people, or tongue, must be brought to Zion, and by a new birth be incorporated and enrolled among her sons, and the privileges of citizenship be extended to them. They are welcomed as brothers; and God Himself receives them into the arms of His grace, and puts them among the children of His love. One by one will the Lord bring them, for they are each one precious in His sight. They shall not be lost sight of in the common mass. What a blessed patent of nobility is it for a man to be a citizen with the saints, and of the household of God!

*Verse 13.* "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." The child of the heavenly Father, who is also the bride of the King's Son; all glorious, adorned with a holiness not only glorious to herself, but also to the Father, and

the Bridegroom, and is the beginning of a heavenly glory. Truth and wisdom in the hidden parts are what the Lord regards; mere skin-deep beauty is nothing in His eyes. The Bridegroom was said to have all His garments perfumed, and the bride is all glorious within. The Saviour will only match with His own grace; the bride glorious in the private exercise of her grace, bending the knee in humble supplication of His divine mercy. I saw thee under the fig tree (John i. 48). "Her clothing is of wrought gold." No daughter of any monarch, or spouse of any one of the kings of the earth, had such a garment. The Lord Himself laboured hard to work out that precious robe, the holy vestment of His righteousness. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." The Lord takes care that nothing shall be wanting to the glory and beauty of His bride. It was Paul's earnest wish and desire to be found in this righteousness, the righteousness of God. This righteousness is the very image of God in the soul, and an image represents a thing in the chief excellency of it. This righteousness is immortal; it ever is righteous, never can be sullied, become old, out of fashion, or threadbare. This puts a price upon it. Devils, sin, enemies and evils of all descriptions may assault, trouble, and disquiet, but they shall never undermine this righteousness.

*Verses 14, 15* are expressive of the glorious manner the bride of King Jesus shall be brought—in raiment of needlework. Not in her sins, and bowed down under a sense of guilt, as at first conversion, nor yet in her own works or doings, but in the glory, righteousness, and perfection of her Lord. "She shall be brought," signifying the true power of grace in her conscience. Jesus in His own holiness shall introduce the beloved of His soul unto the glory of His Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The virgins, her companions that follow her, they shall also be brought—souls that by the grace of God are weaned from the lust of this world, and that are cleansed from worshipping its idols. They follow the bride, internally, in desires, longings and wishes. The same Spirit in the church stirs up converts to pant after, and seek for the mercy of God. They follow the church in the exercise of faith, hope, love, being fixed upon the same glorious Christ. They follow the church in sorrows, sufferings, and temptations. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought."

Salvation is a joyful sound. Wherever it comes it brings gladness with it; many have rejoiced on beholding poor sinners taken captive by its conquering power. Some godly parents, whose souls have travailed in birth for their offspring in hard soul wrestlings and strugglings with God, in prayer for their salvation, have for some time met with many things to discourage them, the object

of their prayers going on contrary to what they have been praying for them. But a spirit of supplication was kept up in the parent; God was sought unto, and prayer made continually for the straying one. At length God has in much mercy put forth the finger of His mighty grace, laid hold upon the conscience of the child. Oh, then what rejoicing! The parent, having sown in tears, now comes with rejoicing, bringing forth the sheaf of joy.

The ministers of the gospel have rejoiced to see the word spoken by them go forth to the salvation of sinners, for this is the desire of their heart, and the request of their lips—to present believers to Christ as a chaste virgin. Believers rejoice in coming, under the sweet leadings and constraining power of salvation, to rehearse something of what God in mercy has done for their souls.

But the great and grand rejoicing will be in the general assembly of all the saints. With what triumphal solemnity will the marriage of Christ and believers be celebrated in heaven! Among the Jews the marriage-house was called the house of praise; there was joy on all hands; but nothing to the joy there will be in heaven when all the elect are brought to glory.

God the Father will rejoice to behold the accomplishment of His covenant, and designs of love. Jesus, the everlasting Bridegroom, will rejoice to behold of the travail of His soul, the joyful fruit of all His bitter pangs and agonies. The eternal Spirit will rejoice to see the perfection of His sanctifying grace, that those souls, who in their natural state were “dead in trespasses and in sins,” now appear in all the perfection of love and grace. The holy angels will rejoice. Great was their joy when the cornerstone and the foundation of salvation was laid in the birth of the holy Child Jesus. Oh, how they will shout when the last top stone shall be brought and set up with shouting, crying, Grace, grace, to it! And how much the saints themselves rejoice when they enter into the King’s palace to be for ever with the Lord!

*Verses 16, 17* declare that there will be a succession of saints from one generation to another: “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.” The ancient saints who stood as fathers in the service of God have all passed away; their spirits are now in glory. The line of grace will never become extinct. As the fathers depart, children will be raised up; so long as time shall last, this succession will be maintained. Saints are a race that neither death nor hell can kill; as long as God lives, His people must live. The Saviour, when upon the earth, prayed for this: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” On earth the Saviour prayed for all the elect; in heaven He hath a watchful care over them. He shall, in and with His ministering servants, go forth, that when they speak in His Name it shall be to many the word of life, quickening dead sinners, for they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live upon Him that begat their souls into life. Thus

His Name, in all the magnitude and power thereof, shall endure, and be continued as long as the sun.

“Whom Thou mayest make princes in all the earth”—not princes of this world, but of the kingdom of Christ, to which, by the grace of God, they are translated; they receive a kingdom which can never be moved. Saints who receive such a glorious kingdom can well afford to lose a few baubles, the trifles of this present world, seeing they gain a kingdom of God, which they have by gift or grant, it being a donation from God their Father: “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Not *a* kingdom, but *the* kingdom, the only one worthy the name; all others will pass away as a tale told. They receive it in its power, grace, and glory.

The Psalm concludes with a promise from Jehovah by the psalmist that the fame of His dear Son, as well as a continuous progeny, should continue in remembrance to all generations. Some names, famous in one generation, have been forgotten in the next; but the fame of the God-man, in the dignity of His Person, in the miracles He wrought, in the sufferings He endured, in the triumph of His death, and in the victory of His resurrection, and in His coronation in glory, shall never be forgotten: “Therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever and ever.” Praise is due from every heart to Him, who redeemed them by His precious blood. Eternal honours shall be heaped upon Him. Happy souls who are favoured to join in the immortal song, for ever crowning Him Lord of all! The espousing of souls to Christ, gathering them from all quarters, uniting them into one body, making them a church, enjoying the fellowship of Himself and each other—all redounds to His eternal glory.

“Let Him be crowned with majesty,  
Who bowed His head to death,  
And be His honours sounded high,  
By all things that have breath.”

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### DANIEL HERBERT’S CONFESSION OF FAITH

*From the preface to his third volume of hymns, April 27th, 1827.*

I believe it is almost a general thing that when any person takes up a new book he is sure to give a peep into the preface; so that from what he may find in the entry, he may form some idea of what may be expected indoors. And perhaps the first inquiry is: Who is this author, and what are his principles? To which I have no objection to make my reply.

I am, then, a poor, helpless, worthless, lost, ruined, and an undone sinner, as considered in my Adam-fall nature; but, blessed be God, I am made a believer in Jesus, and have tasted of that

eternal love flowing from Jehovah the Father who has chosen me in His co-equal Son as my Surety and Redeemer; and, I trust, under the unctuous influence of God the Holy Ghost, I have been led to see and feel myself a poor, forlorn, wretched beggar. But all glory to His special grace, I now see my precious Jesus more rich than I am poor, and that the blessed Spirit has led me to see that a poor sinner is a fit object for a rich Christ; because in Christ there is mercy for the miserable, pardon for the guilty, peace for the distressed, redemption for the slave, life for the dead, eyes for the blind, righteousness for the unholy, hope for the despairing, strength for the fainting, riches for the poor, salvation for the perishing, heaven for those who deserve hell, smiles instead of frowns. All this, and ten times more, flows to a poor believer in Christ, the Rock of ages, who of God is made unto us, the chosen and elect of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption. Well may we say with one, "O thou blessed, loving, living, suffering, dying, risen, reigning Immanuel! through whose blessed atonement a foundation is laid for the sinner's hope, that will never give way"; and, as the venerated Hawker says: "Contrary winds may blow, stormy winds may shake, yet what says a covenant God to His people? 'I will never turn away from thee to do thee good; I will never leave thee; no, I will never, no, never forsake thee; but I will surely do thee good: and in blessing I will bless thee.' Therefore tossed we may be, but lost we cannot be. And O, my dear reader, what an infinite mercy that the precious promises are yea and amen in a precious Christ to the glory of God the Father! For Christ came to put away sin: but how? By once offering Himself on Calvary's tree, He has paid His people's debt, satisfied justice, secured the whole elect. Having sealed the eternal bond between the eternal Three in covenant, He went to heaven with it, bearing the names of those He paid the price of blood for, and ever lives to personate them before His Father's throne as His blood-bought inheritance."

Now this seems to me to be the blessed report that runs through the precious Book of God. But as the prophet Isaiah saith, "Who hath believed the report?" None but those to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed; that is, every believer. And why do not all men believe? Or I might say, Why do any? If you, my reader, are a believer, who made you so? Why do you believe, and not another? Let Paul determine the point. He says, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believe,"\* and no more ever will. Therefore, if any man believe it is because the eternal Jehovah the Father ordained him to eternal life in Christ Jesus before the birth of day, or time was born; therefore, in time,

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\* Strictly speaking, this verse does *not* appear in Paul's epistles, but the spirit of it may be found in many places.

God's elect are all made believers, in consequence of their eternal union to Christ their chosen Head.

But I take the liberty to observe farther, that everything in a sinner's salvation is all of grace, from first to last; and as one observes, "Had not Joseph's brethren believed the report that there was corn in Egypt, they would not have gone: but they did believe, and went and filled their sacks." Just so: no man will ever go to Calvary till he feels his death-plague sore; then it will be, "Lord, save, or I perish." "O, what a glorious foundation is laid in the covenant promises, and the oath of God to rest upon, God the Father's free and eternal praises [choice?] of His people in Christ, in which there can be no change; and Christ's obedience, to which nothing can be added, that being of everlasting efficacy, the "same yesterday, today, and for ever," to which God the Holy Ghost sets His seal; and, as a dear man of God observes, "God's amen, and Christ's verily, with the Spirit's witness, are more sure than all the oaths and creeds of all the men in the world." Nothing more supporting to the mind of a poor self-emptied sinner than God's *wills* and *shalls*. "They shall come unto Me; they shall call upon Me; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God."

So then it is the work of God to make a believer. That God who caused light to shine out of a dark chaos must shine into the soul before the sinner will ever see his own forlorn situation, and so fly for refuge to lay hold on the only hope set before a perishing sinner. Therefore to tell a poor, helpless, ruined, and guilty creature that he should believe, that he ought to believe, and that he can believe, independent of the divine Spirit, you may as well tell the dead man that he should live, and the blind man that he ought to see, and that man can repent, and ought to repent. With as much propriety it may be said that the fish ought to fly and the bird to swim. We read of one poor woman, who must have heard the report of what wonders Christ had wrought in curing the lame, the halt, and the blind; notwithstanding she was so sorely afflicted herself with a deadly disease, yet she roamed about and tried all the physicians she could find out till she was left penniless and got worse and worse. Just so it is with every natural man. No one will ever go to Christ till Christ comes to him. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy"; so that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but a sovereign act of grace.

Now, whoever has been pleased to read thus far can form some idea of my sentiments, and the doctrines I ever wish to maintain; and if these few sentiments are approved of, then my reader may go on, as these few lines are a specimen of what runs through the whole book. It is the last I shall ever print; for as I have passed by my three score years and ten, I send this little book after the others, hoping, praying, and believing that many

poor dears, who know the plague of the heart, will read with comfort and profit when I am gone to my Father's house, wherè I shall have my harp well strung, and my soul well in tune, for an everlasting, never-ending song "to Him who hath loved me, and given Himself for me."

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### THE GODLY SUFFERING UNDER DIVINE JUDGMENTS

*From "London's Lamentations" by Thomas Brooks (1608-1680), written after the Great Fire of London, 1666. Here he deals with the question often asked: When God's judgments fall on a guilty land, why is it that godly people also suffer?*

#### Objection

I would justify the Lord, I would say He is righteous, though my house be burned up, and I am turned out of all; but God has punished the righteous with the wicked, if not more than the wicked. This fiery rod has fallen heavier upon many saints than upon many sinners. How, then, can I justify God? How, then, can I say that the Lord is righteous?

#### Answer

1. *In all ages of the world God's dearest children have been deep sharers with the wicked in all common calamities.* Abraham and his family were by famine driven into Egypt as well as others, and Isaac and his family were by famine driven into the Philistines' country as well as others, and Jacob and his family by famine were driven into Egypt as well as others, and in David's time there was a famine for three years, and in Elijah's time there was a sore famine in Samaria. The difference that God puts between His own and others is not seen in the administration of these outward things: "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." The privileges of the saints lie not in temporals, but in spirituals and eternal, else religion would not be a matter of faith, but sense: and men would serve God not for Himself, but for the gay and gallant things of this world.

2. *There are as many mysteries in providences as there are in prophecies; and many texts of providence are as hard to understand as many texts of Scriptures are.* God's "way is in the sea. His paths are in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known." "His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out." And yet when clouds and darkness are round about Him, "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." When His judgments are a great deep, yet then His righteousness is like the great mountains. There are many mysteries in nature, and many mysteries of state which we are ignorant of; and why,

then, should we wonder that there are many mysteries in providence that we do not understand? Let a man but seriously consider how many possible deaths lurk in his own bowels, and the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleaguer him on every side; how many invisible arrows fly about his ears continually and yet how few have hit him, and that none hitherto have mortally wounded him; and it will doubtless so far affect his heart, as to work him to conclude that great and many and mysterious are the providences that daily attend upon him. Vives reports of a Jew, that having gone over a deep river on a narrow plank in a dark night, and coming the next day to see what danger he had escaped, fell down dead with astonishment. Should God many times but open to us the mysteriousness of His providences, they would be matter of amazement and astonishment to us. I have read that Marcia, a Roman princess, being great with child, had the babe in her killed with lightning, she herself escaping the danger. What a mysterious providence was this! God's providence towards His servants is as a wheel in the midst of a wheel, whose motion and work and end in working is not discerned by a common eye (Ezek. i. 16). The actings of divine providence are many times so dark, intricate, and mysterious, that it will pose men of the most raised parts, and of the choicest experiences, and of the greatest graces, to be able to discern the ways of God in them. There are many mysteries in the works of God as well as in the Word of God.

3. *Sometimes God's own people sin with others, and therefore they smart with others.* Thus Moses and Aaron sinned with others, and therefore they were shut out of Canaan, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness as well as others. "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works; therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." See Rom. ii. 28, 29. Such as were outwardly, but not inwardly, circumcised should be sure to be punished in the day of God's wrath with those who were neither inwardly nor outwardly circumcised. When the good and the bad join in common provocations, no wonder if they suffer in common desolations (Ezek. ix. 6; Rev. xviii. 4; 1 Peter iv. 17). Though gross impieties, like pitch or gunpowder, enrage the fire, yet the sins, the infirmities of God's people add to the flame. Not only Manasseh's bloodshed, but also good Hezekiah's pride and vanity of spirit, boasting and glorying in his worldly riches, brought on the Babylonish captivity upon the Jews.

4. *The people of God many times suffer in common calamities as they are parts and members of that politic body that is punished.* See 2 Sam. xxiv. 10-18. The sins of a city, a society, a company, or a nation, may involve all the members in the same judgment. Though Lot was not guilty of the sins of Sodom, yet Lot was carried away in the captivity of Sodom, as cohabiting with them. And so though many of the precious servants of the Lord in London were not guilty of those gross impieties that their neighbours were guilty of, yet, cohabiting either with them or near them, they were burnt up and destroyed with them. Achan's family were not guilty of Achan's sacrilege, and yet Achan's family were destroyed for Achan's sacrilege. The burning of London was a national judgment, and this national judgment was a product of national sins, as I have formerly proved. Now mark, though the people of God may be personally innocent, yet because they are members of a nocent [guilty] body, they are liable to undergo the temporal smart of national judgments. Doubtless a whole city may be laid desolate for the wickedness of one man, or of a few men, that dwelleth in it. "One sinner destroyeth much good."

5. *When good men who cannot be justly charged with public sins do yet fall with wicked men by public judgments, you must remember that God has several different ends in inflicting one and the same judgments, both upon the good and upon the bad.* The metal and the dross go both into the fire together, but the dross is consumed, and the metal refined. The stalk and the ear of corn fall upon the threshing-floor under one and the same flail; but the one is shattered in pieces, the other is preserved. From one and the same olive, and from under one and the same press is crushed out both oil and dregs, but the one is tunned up for use, the other thrown out as unserviceable. The same judgments that befall the wicked may befall the righteous, but not upon the same account. The righteous are cast into the furnace for trial, but the wicked for their ruin. The righteous are signally sanctified by fiery dispensations, but the wicked are signally worsened by the same dispensations. The very self-same judgment that is as a loadstone to draw the righteous towards heaven will be as a millstone to sink the wicked down to hell. The pillar of fire that went before Israel had a light side and a dark side; the light side was towards God's people, and the dark side was towards the Egyptians. The flames of London will prove such a pillar both to the righteous and the wicked. That will certainly be made good upon the righteous and the wicked, whose habitations have been destroyed by London's flames, that the Greek epigram speaks of the silver axe, the ensign of justice:

"That sword that cuts the bad in twain,  
The good doth wound and heal again."

Those dreadful judgments that have been the axe of God's revenging justice, to wound and break the wicked in pieces, shall be

righteous men's cures and their golden restoratives.

6. *God sometimes wraps up His own people with the wicked in desolating judgments that He may before all the world wipe off that reproach which atheists and wicked men are apt to cast upon Him, as if He were partial, as if He were a respecter of persons, and as if His ways were not just and equal.* God, to stop the mouth of iniquity, the mouth of blasphemy, hath made His own people as desolate as others by that fiery calamity that has passed upon them. Such men that have been eye-witnesses of God's impartial dealing with His own people in those days when London was in flames, must say that God is neither partial nor fond. And let thus much suffice by way of answer to this objection.

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### LETTER BY JOHN TURTON

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Dear Friend—I must redeem my pledge and let you have a few lines. Time is fast hastening, this being the last day of October. How true the words, "Like an Indian arrow it flies and like a shooting star." It is a solemn thing to live, and a very solemn thing to die; and yet, die we must, that being the penalty of disobedience and transgression. I don't think I need remind you of that, yet it is our wisdom to consider, graciously and reverently to consider, this important truth and to ask ourselves that all-important question: "For heaven are thy credentials clear?"

To bear about with us the sacred persuasion of an interest in the great salvation which Christ has accomplished—O, dear friend, this is to possess the Pearl of great price! However poor and feelingly forlorn and forsaken in regard to temporals, if we possess that, then we are very rich. I do hope and pray you may have many earnestness and tokens of this in your own soul: that the means of grace and ordinances of the gospel will be to you as the wells of salvation from which you are favoured to draw refreshing draughts of comfort and consolation. If you are like me, you will feel to need them when your soul is passing through trying paths—exercised as to what way to take; pleading at the throne of grace; sinful, begging mercy, direction, and not always receiving answers; exposed, when forlorn, to Satan's temptations; buffeted, overwhelmed in spirit. O, how welcome is a word, an assuring word! And who can speak that word? Only He that spake light out of darkness.

These seasons are in His hand as truly as the successive seasons of the year are: seed-time and harvest, etc. Such are needful for the productivity of the earth. And when we "for a season are in heaviness," you may depend upon it there is a "needs be" for it. The Redeemer's value, His precious blood and righteousness, the gracious unction of His love, His Spirit—O, how rich

and savoury they are to the sin-stricken, tempted, perplexed soul! The weary wayfarer and warfarer looks and longs for such relief. And does not the gospel word proclaim rest for such? May such comfort come to you to refresh and cheer. Then your heart shall live again and praise Him. The appointments of Jehovah are gracious, well-ordered appointments. He hath not appointed you to death, but to obtain salvation and eternal glory.

But let us remember that "it is given unto us not only to believe on His name, but to suffer for His sake." This on His behalf. As professed believers, called by His grace, we encounter many oppositions and opposers of His truth. Speaking for myself, I have had a few trying examples of this. Such a mixture is noticeable with its poisonous effects. May the Lord graciously appear among our churches. May there be a weeping between the porch and the altar, and a begging of the Lord to spare His people, to keep us from looking upon sin lightly, saying, "It is nought, it is nought." And particularly the sin or error, which is nothing less than a shaft of Satan against the Redeemer's person, His Deity. If He has been revealed to us in His loveliness, in His complex Person; if we have, by faith, thus received Him, then, as we have therefore received Him, so let us walk in Him. Let that be our rule. Let us sanctify Him in our hearts and keep separate from all who would attempt, either by word or practice, to belittle His sacred Person. But who is sufficient for these things?

In regard to our country's position, how solemn! May the nation really be led by the Lord to repent of the evils in our midst, both in church and state. Truly we need the Lord on our side, having such formidable enemies to encounter. If it should please God to grant us victory, I hope and pray that it may have a beneficial effect, that we shall be constrained to acknowledge His hand and His might.

The 11th November approaches. I do hope there will be no silly sentimental attitude as is usually the case. What does the Lord require but to do justly, and to walk humbly? A solemn sense of our dependence upon Him is better than ten thousand rams and rivers of oil. But how many are possessed of this blessed secret? But let us go to Him who has the issue of all things in His hand, persuaded that every event has its determined direction, and He is the great Arbiter of all destinies.

Yours sincerely,

Warrington, October 31st, 1940.

J. Turton

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If the Lord keeps you praying, He has something to give you.

*J. K. Popham*

Of all things, men cannot endure to cast their crowns at the Lamb's feet—I mean, to sacrifice their glory and esteem to Christ, or to be nothing that He may be all in all.

*Manton*

## THE BALANCINGS OF THE CLOUDS

*Notes of a Sermon preached by Mr. S. Curtis (of Southill) at Rehoboth Chapel, Coventry, on October 29th, 1924.*

**Text** :—"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" (Job xxxvii. 16).

These words were spoken by Elihu to Job, who was a sorely tried child of God, a man who had indeed been stripped; stripped of his possessions, bereft of his family, stripped of his sons, stripped of his former glory—a poor afflicted, misunderstood, misrepresented man. What a case was that of Job! Job's three friends had ceased to answer him. Now Elihu speaks, and he tries to convince Job of God's justice, His equity in all His dealings with the children of men; and that, by His great and mighty works. How infinitely precious is that God with whom we profess we have to do, upon whose Name we call from time to time, and not only so, but more than that, that God whose presence and whose favour it is our privilege at times sweetly to realise and enjoy! A sight and sense of God's greatness, our own insignificance, God's holiness and our sinfulness, will close our mouths, make us dumb under every dispensation of His hand, and cause us to acknowledge His justice in all His dealings. When we rightfully feel these things, then we can say with the poet:

"His strokes are fewer than our sins,  
And lighter than our crimes."

In looking at the words of our text for a little while as the Lord may help me, I will speak in the first place of *the clouds*; then notice a little about *the balancings* of the clouds, and show how the Lord does balance the dark clouds in the experience of His people; then we have in my text *the question*, "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?"

The clouds! There are many clouds. The disciples feared as they entered the cloud. Doubtless they wondered what it meant, but although they feared, they had to acknowledge, yea, they said, and undoubtedly with a feeling heart, "Master, it is good for us to be here." It may be that some of my hearers have had to say, in connection with those things which you have greatly feared, those particular circumstances into which you have been brought, "It is good for me to be here." It is a wonderful thing to feel that the Lord does all things well, that He makes no mistake, but that He does order and overrule all things, even our life's minutest circumstance, for our good and to the honour and glory of His own great Name.

These clouds set forth those painful dispensations of His hand which His people at times are called upon to experience, and which are sometimes the dark clouds of affliction. Afflictions come. They take possession of our bodies. We are not con-

sulted as to whether they may come, or whether they shall come. My friends, they come; but they do not come themselves, for no affliction arises out of the dust, nor any trouble comes by chance. They are under divine control, and one has said, and very truthfully too:

“ All must come, and last, and end,  
As shall please my heavenly Friend.”

Now, isn't it nice to feel that when you are in the very depth of affliction, when you are in the furnace, when it looks as though every particle of your religion will be burned up and consumed altogether, and you will have nothing left—I say, isn't it sweet then to be favoured? It is a favour indeed, for

“ All must come, and last, and end,  
As shall please my heavenly Friend.”

And what is the affliction for? Why, to burn up the wood, hay, stubble, dross and tin, causing just that little religion which God Himself has given us to shine, that religion which is indestructible, and which no afflictions, no temptations and no troubles can possible destroy. That precious grain of grace, that little religion which God plants in the hearts of His people, is an indestructible one; it is an imperishable one which will stand every storm the child of God has to face. And to have that gracious experience is an evidence that we do possess it. And why do we possess it? Because God Himself in His great mercy hath given it to us.

What a dark cloud affliction is, my friends! What a dark cloud it was to that family at Bethany—Mary and Martha and Lazarus—when the brother, whom the Lord loved, was sick. What did they do? Why, they did the very best thing they possibly could; they sent to tell Jesus. They could not give Him any information because He had a perfect knowledge of their affliction, their every circumstance, and their every trial, and also of all His people's. When you and I come before God at the mercy seat to try and pour out our sorrows, although we cannot tell Him of one thing He does not know, yet He will be enquired of. Having a perfect knowledge of our case, He understands our broken language and our poor attempts to make it known unto Him. The clouds! When those godly women sent to tell Jesus of the dark cloud that had entered into their household, He delayed. He did not go post haste to them to raise Lazarus from a bed of affliction, no, but abode two days where He was; and then He went, and it seemed as though He had gone just too late. Ah! but it was not too late for Him to display His almighty power, to make His sovereign goodness and His mercy known, and to prove beyond a doubt His almighty power and Godhead. Had He raised Lazarus from a bed of affliction, none would have taken much notice of it, but when He wrought that miracle and raised him from the dead, what a proof of His almighty power! What

a dark cloud it was that came over them! The breadwinner laid aside, and the breadwinner taken away. Perhaps those godly sisters said, and said with bitterness of soul, What shall we do? What will become of us? What can poor people in trouble do better than trust in God. "Trust in Him at all times." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

It was also a dark cloud when that godly man died, and in debt too, and for this debt the creditor came to take the two sons of the poor widow for bondmen. Oh, how her heart must have been overwhelmed within her under this dark, dark cloud! Doubtless many of God's people have been encouraged by the particular case of the prophet. He died in debt! He was an honest man, but died in debt because he could not help himself. I cannot conceive of the grace of God being in exercise in a man's heart and he be careless and unconcerned as to his not being able to meet his bills. True religion will make a man honest in all his dealings, and I believe that good man was honest, and therefore his debt would be a trouble to him. How the cloud would darken! and when the creditor came to take her two sons for bondmen, what did she do? Why, she told the prophet. And was not Elisha a type of that good Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ? How good it is when we are helped in time of trouble and distress to tell the great Prophet about it! There are times when God's dear people go to Him in their troubles and their distresses, and are so helped to pour out their hearts before Him that they find comfort. A throne of grace affords them sweet relief. O how good it is to unbosom our cares before God and at His mercyseat to see His hand, for the issue of this trial, this dark dispensation, this cloud, will then be made manifest. It was well in the case of the poor widow woman because the little oil was multiplied, and she was enabled to pay the debt, and she and her children lived upon the rest. A beautiful figure of the riches of grace! O that grace and love of His whereby He has paid all the vast debts of His chosen ones!

The dark clouds! There are the clouds of adversity. What adversities the dear man Job experienced when one thing after another came upon him! The loss of his servants, the loss of his cattle, the loss of his children, and then himself to be afflicted as he was. What a dark cloud of adversity! How many crooks are found in the experience of God's dear people! Their trials, their temptations, sometimes the hidings of God's face, the withholdings of His favours to their souls—all, as it were, unite in their experience, and form one great black cloud.

Now there is the balancing of the clouds. And who can do this? Who can balance the clouds literally? None but God. What a wonderful thing it is that those large bodies of water should be suspended in the air—balanced—and pour themselves out in small drops of rain upon the earth! People who profess not to believe

in God, if they would only carefully consider His works even in this, it seems to me impossible that they could deny His Being.

But there is a spiritual meaning to this balancing of the clouds. God puts His bow in the clouds. You know after that dark cloud and the deluge had come upon all the earth, that Noah and those with him in the ark went forth after the flood, and Noah offered a sacrifice to God, and the Lord smelled a sweet savour. There was that in it which was acceptable and well-pleasing unto Him. What a wonderful thing it is when He smells a sweet savour, when there is that which is acceptable to God in that which you and I offer, that which we present before Him! And there are those times in the experience of His dear saints when they have the witness within that their prayers are accepted, and their songs of praise are accepted as a savour to God. It is a wonderful thing to find acceptance with God. Well, the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and He made a promise that He would put His bow in the cloud, and that bow should be a token between Him and all the living of His everlasting covenant that He would not again destroy the earth by water. He says, "The bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, and I will remember my everlasting covenant." Beautiful words! "The bow shall be in the cloud." God always sees it there, but you and I sometimes fail to see it, although that does not alter the fact of its being there. "The bow shall be in the cloud," and when we are favoured to see this, it is to see and to feel that God has some wise, some very kind and gracious purpose in the dark cloud that has come; this cloud of affliction, this bereavement, this heavy trial which has come upon us so unexpectedly. O to feel the bow is there, and that God has a purpose of mercy and of love toward us!

Does He not balance the cloud? He enables you to leave your case with Him, and isn't there something so comforting, so sweet and so precious about it? And in connection with that, perhaps you see His hand. Yes, you see His hand, that hand which you thought was going against you, and that hand which seemed as though it was bringing destruction and utter ruin is now seen for your good; God's arm is made bare on your behalf. His goodness passes before you in the way, and you are ashamed of your murmuring spirit. You have not only a quiet mind, but you sweetly acquiesce in His holy sovereign will, and you bless Him for the way He has led you, and you say with the poet:

"Thus far my God has led me on  
And made His truth and mercy known.  
My hopes and fears alternate rise,  
And comforts mingle with my sighs."

O the balancings of the clouds as He favours His people to see His hand towards them for good in these dark clouds in which they have been!

Some day the Lord will balance the cloud with a word from

Himself. Oh, friends, what wonders a word from the Lord sometimes does, when He speaks with power, and when He causes a word to drop! How that word meets and suits our case. I have sometimes said that if the Lord should put, as it were, this Book into my hands, and say, "You just find a portion that will be suitable to your case, and I will apply that word to you," it really seems, friends, as though there is no portion in the whole of God's Book that would suit me. But when the Lord speaks the word, isn't it nice? Doesn't He just meet the case? Why? Because it is a word for a case, and it is a case for that word. Friends, *then* the cloud is balanced; the word puts it all right.

What a wonderful balancing of the cloud it was in the case of dear Jacob when he saw the wagons which Joseph his son had sent to take him down to Egypt, his son whom he had mourned as dead, his son of whom he had thus spoken: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin also? I am bereaved of my children; all these things are against me"! It was a dark cloud, and he really felt it to be so, but when he saw the carts he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die." What a balancing of the cloud it was!

The Lord balances the cloud sometimes by a sanctifying effect, and it is well when things are sanctified. And what are the fruits of sanctification? Humility, submission to the will of God, and an acknowledgment of His sovereign right in all His dealings with us. That is a beautiful word: "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." When is the "afterward"? It is an indefinite period of time. Years, perhaps, may roll by, and you see not God's hand in a particular dispensation—that dark cloud. Perhaps you have never been able to understand it, and then the time comes when one thing in your experience is interpreted and explained by another, and you look back for twenty years or more upon that very thing, and you see the important link in the chain of other things connected with it, making up the golden chain of God's all-wise providence. That "afterward" which concerned you so much is the very thing in which you see God's hand. Perhaps you feel a sweet sense of God's goodness, and He has caused you to see He has done all things well. You bless Him for it—the "afterward" has come—the dark cloud is balanced.

Sometimes you feel the dark cloud of desertion, and then He comes again and manifests His favour, causes His sweet presence to be felt, and fulfils His sweet word in the experience of His child: "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord"; and when they saw Him again the cloud was balanced. And isn't your cloud balanced when He comes again, and your sorrowful

heart rejoices? Your harp which was hung upon the willows, and which you thought would never be required again, is taken down, and you sing the praises of that God who hath done such great things for you, whereof you are glad.

Then we have in my text a question: "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" Dost thou know? What a question it is! Do we indeed know, do I indeed know, the balancings of the clouds?

Well, how are they known? They are only known as we have a gracious experience of them. This is one of those things that can never be known by merely reading God's word, or hearing of any of His dear saints telling what God has done for them. We may read, we may hear, but that does not bring knowledge, that does not bring a gracious experience. We know as we walk in the path, and as we are brought to feel, in the dark clouds through which we have to pass, that God has a gracious purpose therein. He has ordered them; He has caused them to come, as we read in connection with my text—and they are beautiful words—"Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, *the wondrous works of Him is perfect in knowledge?*" He whose knowledge is perfect as it concerns His people knows their case, their every circumstance; He knows and understands it. He knows the number of the days appointed to them in this wilderness, He knows their every sorrow, and every day trial. He has a perfect knowledge. "The wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge." How wonderful His works in creation! Most wonderful His works in providence! Most merciful in His work of redemption, and His work of grace in the heart of sinners like me! O how wonderful it all is! "Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?"

The Lord bless His own word, and His Name shall have the praise. Amen.

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### THE INWARD SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST'S SOUL

*From the twelve sermons on Isaiah liii by Thomas Manton  
(1620-1677)*

What Christ suffered. His sufferings were not only outward and visible, such as He endured in the garden, in the hall, and on the cross—buffetings, scourgings, taunting insultations, being mocked, spit upon, crowned with thorns, pierced, crucified. Not only these, but inward sufferings, such as were:

1. *The assaults of spiritual wickedness.* The devil, seeing Christ under great agonies, thought he had a great advantage upon Him, and therefore was very busy with Him. Now God gave him leave, and Christ offered as it were the occasion, being stirred with

passions; though, as a glass of clean water that is shaken, there was no filth to arise. God gave Satan leave, the chains of His providence being taken off from him, as in that place: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," hell's licentious time—it was, as it were, let loose to do what it would. The devil, who would tempt Christ in His fasting, would now much more in His dissolution and desertion. Hell had a kind of license to tempt Christ, so far as it might stand with the innocency of His person.

2. *The desertion of God the Father*, whereby all comfort was eclipsed and hidden from His soul; He was sequestered from all sense of comfort, though the union were not dissolved. Therefore, He crieth out, "My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" Though He lost His Father's love [i.e. the sense of it], it was not as if He had apprehensions that there was any change in God towards Him; God was the same to Christ still, though not appearing in the same way; as the sun is the same, whether it shine through a red or green glass, and so casteth sometimes a comfortable and sometimes a bloody reflection.

3. He suffered inwardly *the impressions of His Father's wrath*, and that was a heavy burden indeed; and, therefore, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." It is said, He was "made a curse for us"; not only deprived of love, but made a curse. He suffered so much of the wrath of God, and underwent the curse of the law, so far forth as it might stand with His office and Person, that, if He had not been God, He would have remained under that curse to all eternity.

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### VII. The Principle of Strict Communion

*A letter was received asking what attitude a Strict Baptist church should take if one of its members, who has removed to a distant place, sits down at the Lord's table with those practising open communion. In answering, Mr. Philpot deals with the underlying principles of the practice of strict communion. We trust this may be of help to those who cannot understand our position.*

We have no doubt what answer to give to the above inquiry; but before we do so, we shall endeavour to state as simply and as briefly as we can the grounds and principles on which Strict Baptists act in such a matter as the case before us, as they are often much misunderstood or misrepresented.

It may seem, we freely admit, at first sight, somewhat contrary to the love and spirit of the gospel, not only to refuse the Lord's Supper to acknowledged brethren, if unbaptized, but to carry the point to such a degree of rigid and extreme strictness

as to visiting the Lord's table with open communion churches. It is necessary, therefore, to have good grounds on which to rest a practice which seems to many so opposed to the spirit of the gospel.

As we cannot, in our limited space, prove the point for which we are contending, though it is most capable of proof,\* we shall merely state the principles on which Strict Baptist churches act. We start, then, from this point, that baptism and the Lord's supper are both of them ordinances of divine institution, and as such were intended to be permanent memorials of what are represented thereby. This simple fact takes completely out of our hands both ordinances; and we are no more at liberty to change and alter the one than the other, either in its mode of administration or the persons to whom it is to be administered. If we may at our pleasure attend to or neglect and despise one ordinance, we may do so to the other; and if we may, just as we choose, either baptize or not baptize, sprinkle infants or immerse believers, we may, in a similarly loose, self-chosen way, utterly neglect the Lord's supper, or substitute some other elements for bread and wine. It is against this laxity of principle and practice that the Strict Baptists set themselves. They assert, what none can deny from the Scriptures, that the apostles required baptism as the door of entrance into the church, and that the Lord's supper is a church ordinance. They argue, therefore, that an unbaptized person is excluded by Scripture precedent and practice from partaking of the church ordinance of the Lord's supper. Believing this to be the Scripture rule, they dare not violate it or depart from it. We are not here, let it be observed, proving the point, which would require pages to do, but merely stating the grounds and principles on which Strict Baptists act.

Now, believing as they do, that it is unscriptural to break bread to unbaptized persons, they carry out that principle in visiting with church censures those members of their church who sanction and encourage an unscriptural practice. They say, and that most justly, "It would be highly inconsistent in us to sanction, directly or indirectly, what we believe is unscriptural, and thus deny our own faith and practice. We firmly believe that the inspired apostles of our blessed Lord would not have suffered an unbaptized person† to sit down to the Lord's Supper. If, then, any of

\* See J. C. Philpot's *Strict Communion*, obtainable from Gospel Standard Publications, price 15p.

† We have sometimes felt and said that Paul would no more have allowed a converted heathen, say the Philippian jailor, to sit down unbaptized to the Lord's supper than Moses would have allowed an uncircumcised Israelite to partake of the Passover. Not that we put baptism and circumcision on the same footing; for the one is of the gospel, and the other of the law. The one is the obedience of a believing heart (Mark xvi. 16); the other was imperative on pain of being cut off from Israel (Gen. xvii. 14). J.C.P.

our members sanction, by sitting down with unbaptized persons, what we believe to be unscriptural practice, we cannot pass it by. It is a violation of church order, a breaking down of a hedge built up, as we believe, between the church and the world by the inspired apostles of our blessed Lord. It may seem hard to punish our members for partaking of the Lord's supper with believing brethren; but these believing brethren are acting unscripturally, and walking, so far, disorderly. If, therefore, we take no notice of our members encouraging and sanctioning disorderly walking, we are partakers of their sin, and are ourselves guilty of disobedience in winking at theirs. Thus, hard though it may seem to be, we visit them with church censures, that we may clear ourselves of being consenting parties to their act of disorder."

It is, then, on these grounds that the Strict Baptists visit with church censures those of their members who sit down with open communion churches. The case is purely a point of gospel order. It does not at all touch the question whether those with whom the member sits down are believing brethren or not, and whether the love and spirit of the gospel should supersede and, as it were, overrule and override the rules and practice of the gospel. Between the two, gospel spirit and gospel practice, there can be no real collision. But the point is whether those who desire to walk orderly may countenance and sanction a brother who, in their judgment, walks disorderly. It is not a question of brotherly love, but of gospel order; and it comes much to this: If I love my brother, and would, as a pledge of love, partake with him of the memorials of the Lord's dying love, may I do so at the expense of disobeying what I believe to be the revealed will of the Lord whom we both love? I say, "No"; and he ought to say "No" too; for he should not wish me to wound my conscience by my disobedience, or by acting contrary to my principles.

But now the question arises: Does removal from a church by distance justify a member breaking through that rule of church order which rests on the grounds already stated? If it do, the same case of removal would justify any other act of disobedience or disorder, making Christian conduct, or at least rules of church order, depend on so many miles distance by road or rail. On this principle, what would be very wrong for a member to do who lived in London would not be wrong at all if he went to live in the country; and what he would not and should not do if he were a mile or two from his own chapel he could do and might do if he lived 80 miles off. But church rule and church discipline cannot be measured by distance like a cab-fare, or adjusted by a railway time-table. If certain conduct be wrong at home, it is wrong abroad; and removing to a distance, even where there is no church near of the same faith and order, cannot justify breaking the rules of church order, and of the church to which the member belongs.

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## OBITUARY

**George Dann**, a member of the church at The Dicker for 35 years, entered into eternal rest on April 28th, 1971, aged 81.

Our dear father was born on July 4th, 1889, in the village of Chiddingfold, not far from the place where he was to spend the greater part of his life. He was favoured with godly parents, whose concern it was to bring up their family of eight children (of whom father was third) in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord."

There is not much recorded of his early days in a spiritual sense, but during his early teens he was placed in the care of a godly man, Mr. G. Holmes of Willesden. Here he was preserved from open sin, but on occasions would refer to the time when he told a lie to his master after committing a sinful deed, which he knew was wrong, and the inward trouble he was brought into because of it. After a year in London, he returned home to help in his father's business, and attend The Dicker Chapel.

About this period he records a time which he never forgot, and in later years often referred to it. It was when Mr. Butler was preaching, and in his discourse, he turned and looked pointedly at him and quoted:

"The time of love will come,  
When we shall clearly see  
Not only that He shed His blood  
But each shall say, 'For me.'"

This entered his heart, and he cherished it secretly, but it was many years after, when he was favoured to enter into and understand the truth of those lines.

When about the age of nineteen, his affection was drawn towards our dear mother, and he became very concerned as to whether this was a right step. During this period, he was much tried about it, as mother was led to join the church (see *G.S.* Nov. 1970) and he felt so unworthy, but in due time the way was made plain, and they were married in November, 1915, and were spared together to share joys and sorrows for 54 years.

He served two years in the first World War, and though often in much danger while in France, and at times being not far from the front line, he was mercifully preserved, and often felt whilst there, that God was watching over him, though surrounded by numbers who showed no thought of the living God.

After his return home, being a keen business man, his mind was much occupied in the further development of the business, but he was not left in this. The Lord dealt very solemnly with him. In 1931, his health broke down, and he was brought into deep affliction for six or seven months. Of this time he writes:

"The rod of God was upon me. He had a purpose in this sore trial, but I did not know till later that it was to teach me the way of salvation. The Lord chastens whom He loves. Before this I had been living in a measure of ease, resting on former deliverances, having seen, I hope, His hand in hearing and answering prayer from the age of 19."

The affliction increased, and eventually, in much pain and distress he was admitted to King's College Hospital. Here he was brought into deep soul trouble. He writes: "I was alone before God (and none could bring deliverance but almighty power) like poor old Jacob—almost in despair of hope. Wearisome nights were appointed me." After six weeks in hospital he was sent home, somewhat improved in health, though in a very weak state, and his mind still in much darkness and distress. Of this time he writes:

"Oh, the cries in secret that went up to the Lord to appear on my behalf, but the heavens were as brass, and like one of old, I felt, 'He

shutteth out my prayer.' Only those who are thus led, can enter into this sorrow of heart.

'Can any door of hope be found?  
Not any sure on nature's ground.'

Though still in much weakness of body, I walked the house and fields begging for relief and mercy. It seemed that hell was before me, and I feeling lost to all hope. Walking down towards the pig field, I viewed the moment of my overthrow; it was so powerful and so real, I felt the end must come.

"The following day I went across to my father's house, went in and sat down, as I felt, for the last time. My distress was visible. I took my father's hand saying, 'Goodbye father, I shall never survive the night.' It was real too, to my feelings. A little smile came on his face, and (I believe now he had a living witness within that deliverance would soon be manifested) he said, 'Cheer up, my boy, on Jesus' aid rely.' But I had no word of cheer from the Lord, to say that my sins were all forgiven. I went home in my distress.

"The next morning, still pleading my cause, I picked up the hymn-book and lighted on hymn 261. This hymn, especially this verse :

'*It is the Lord*, whose matchless skill  
Can from afflictions raise  
Matter *eternity* to fill  
With ever-growing praise.'

was made a great blessing to my soul, and faith and hope were strengthened. For this blessing made manifest, I can say, 'Ebenezers were raised to His praise.'

He had been made to feel something of the depth of his sinnership, and brought to cry from his heart, "Guilty, guilty," before a holy God, but what joy filled his heart as he experienced the sweet mercy of his covenant God! He was gradually strengthened in body, and in due course enabled to return to business life, but, as he writes : "I was now an exercised man regarding eternal matters, seeking salvation, and going to the house of God with a real case." Food for his soul was his concern, and the mercy of God was his delight. Hymn 11 (Gadsby's) was one of his favourites, and he was often heard by his family to sing it during the following years.

It became a continual exercise to him regarding the ordinances of the Lord's House. He felt his unfitness and inability to take such a solemn step. During this period there were supply ministers at Zoar, but he was fed under the ministry of the Lord's dear servants. He knew the weakness of his sinful nature and the power of the enemy, and felt his dependence on the mercy of God, and rejoiced in free and sovereign grace.

Towards the end of 1936, he was much exercised, and begged the Lord to give him another token of His love. This the Lord was pleased to give him under the ministry of Mr. Frost, at Ninfield. The text was Gen. xviii. 12-15, and of this time he wrote:

"This was all for me. What a blessed covenant! I sat and wept beyond control; the ministry so entered into my path, that I could say, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.' Oh, the sweetness I felt—meat and drink to my poor soul.' Later when Mr. Frost preached from Luke viii 15:—"But that on the good ground . . . having heard the word, *keep it*, and bring forth fruit with patience," he writes:

"This was a blessed time. I hope I could say it had found the 'good ground' of my poor soul. I had experienced the wayside hearer, the sandy ground, the falling on the rocky substance which could never bring forth fruit to the honour of God. Blessed be God for these visits! My faith grew stronger in feeling that the Lord was with me. How could I hide it? My cup ran over, and I was zealous for the word of life.

"Mr. Rowell (Senior), preached that evening at Eastbourne from 2 Cor.

iv. 7, another meal for me : ' But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.' What a treasure! This is one of the spiritual jewels I prize. Why me, Lord? I love the habitations of Thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."

We often heard him refer to this 'treasure in earthen vessels' during his latter years. It was evidently a very special season to him.

Shortly after this, Mr. Main of Scaynes Hill was sent (as he said) to preach to him. The text was 1 John v. 6, but father felt the first 11 verses to be very special, and under the preaching of the gospel that day, he felt his heart "full with the blessing of the Lord." He wanted to tell the friends what a dear Saviour he had found. The time of love had come, which Mr. Butler had spoken to him of about 30 years before, and he felt he could hold back no longer. He was baptized on Sunday, April 18th, 1937, by Mr. C. H. Frost, under whose ministry he had been much blessed and favoured. It was a good day to him, and he felt the peace of God resting on his spirit, and the answer of good conscience.

His soul still fed under the ministry, and he was favoured with many sweet tokens, though he knew the conflict within, and was tempted at times whether he was a true character of grace, but was encouraged again and again by the renewed application of the words, "It is the Lord."

As the years passed on, he increasingly proved that 'through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom.' During this period he refers to a special time, when this promise was given with power in earlier years, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and was then again made a great strength to him, and enabled him to press forward in hope. It was noticeable that in the latter years of his life, he gradually withdrew from business affairs, and was evidently mainly concerned to be right for his approaching end.

In 1968, after a period of 62 years in the business, he retired, and of this time he writes,

"Many years have passed, and I look back with amazement at the goodness of our God. My life seems but a vapour. Being now retired, one would feel more time to meditate on divine matters, but alas, what a helpless creature one feels! I often have to say, 'I have no religion, only what the Lord has given me'; my only hope of salvation :

'Would he have taught me to trust in His Name,  
And thus far have brought me, to put me to shame?'"

He valued the many opportunities he was afforded of attending the means of grace, and especially the ministry of his dear pastor, Mr. J. W. Tyler. He was specially concerned with the welfare of the many little causes of truth.

He records a special time of blessing in March 3rd, 1968, whilst at the Lord's table, when two friends were received into the church. He wrote: "This was a blessed time. I could have cried aloud, 'It is the Lord. Praise Him.'"

In February, 1970, our dear mother was called to her eternal rest. This was a heavy loss, but dear father was wonderfully supported and upheld, and constantly made mention of the mercy of his God.

Not long before his end, he said to a friend with whom he was walking around the grave yard (where he was often found to be, especially after mother was taken), "It has been mercy, mercy, mercy, all the way."

He was blessed with good health to the end, and was present in the Lord's house, where he loved to be, on the Sabbath previous to his home call. The end came suddenly. In the early hours of the following Wednesday morning, April 28th, 1971, he was taken ill with a severe heart attack, and within two hours quietly breathed his last to be "for ever with the Lord."

We feel it can be said of him, as Mr. Frost said to him after his baptism: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him

out of all his troubles". We mourn the loss of dear praying parents, but our loss is their eternal gain.

The Family.

**Harold Wilfred Jones**, beloved deacon at Providence Chapel, Haydock, entered his eternal rest on October 12th, 1971, aged 73. He held the position of corresponding deacon and secretary to the church from March, 1938, which he graciously fulfilled to the time of his sickness and death.

The following is from his own writings :

"I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity and continued to live in sin and loved it, growing up in nature's darkness and ignorance, and would have continued in such until this moment had not the Lord in His unmerited mercy stopped me in my mad career. When I was about twenty years of age, when retiring to bed one morning after working during the night, I was filled with fear and cried for mercy, afraid of what should happen to me. I feel this was only a slavish fear.

"I resided in Shrewsbury (where I was born on July 4th, 1898) until November, 1921. While in employment on the L.N.W. Railway as a fireman at Shrewsbury, I met with an accident (natural people call them accidents)—it was the part loss of the sight in my left eye. Then came another trial after I had somewhat got over the injury to my left eye, at the same time sorrowing over my evil ways. There came word I was to be transferred, either to Workington or Sutton Oak, near St. Helens, as chargeman cleaner, which position had been given me at Shrewsbury after the loss of my sight in my left eye. I chose Sutton Oak, feeling it was nearer home than Workington. This transfer was indeed a great trial to me, but I lived to prove it was all for my good.

"After a short time at Sutton Oak, I was taken ill, and believe it was due to conviction of sin and the solemn and dread consequence of death. After a little recovery, I was asked to go to a Convalescent Home at Southport, a Railway Mission Home. I went there and tried to amend my ways, to justify myself by that before God. After several weeks I returned to my work. There was a deacon of the Strict Baptist chapel at Haydock there who spoke to me and enquired if I had received any spiritual benefit at Southport. I answered him that I had received benefit both spiritually and bodily, and in this way conversation took place between us, which in some ways offended pride, but caused me some exercises and thoughts. He asked me to attend a service at Haydock Strict Baptist Chapel, which I did, and well remember the text the first time I ever entered a Strict Baptist chapel : Zechariah i. 8."

Mr. Jones told me he never in all his life heard any ministry like it and felt more and more the condemnation within before God, and said:

"By the mercy and grace of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, I was brought to know what I am, and as a result of my sinful and wicked ways was one day brought to my knees in fear and trembling, and cried, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. What shall I do? Where shall I go? What will become of me? Mercy, O God, mercy, mercy! I am lost, ruined, undone. Eternity! Eternity!' Yet I was greatly respected by people and by my friends and all who knew me as being very modest and reserved, and possessing a tender disposition—a so-called nice young man. But O this great world of evil, snares all around!

"Well, time rolled on and I knew not what to do with myself but was moved by something within me daily to call upon God for forgiveness and deliverance, and I have many times witnessed that He heard my prayers and has answered them.

'God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.'

"I was in my unregenerate days a member of the R.A.O.B. I was very tried about this association after the Lord convinced me of sin, but I fell into temptation and ventured one evening to a R.A.O.B. meeting held in a public house in St. Helens (with the suggestions within—which

I am convinced were from Satan—‘There is no harm in it. The objects are good, trying to do good to your fellow men, philanthropy, etc!’. But I had not been in long when felt constrained to leave in fear and trembling and crying for mercy. I believe the Lord spoke those words to me: ‘Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.’ Never after did I go. The Lord in His mercy did separate me entirely.

“Time went on and I used to attend the chapel at Haydock whenever I could, but it was needful for me to go home to Shrewsbury every other weekend; I felt it my duty as my mother was a widow, but O what a barren place it was to me spiritually! I never wanted to reside there again. It was Moab to my soul.”

In April, 1923, the writer of this obituary started at Sutton Oak where he had previously worked. Mr. Jones left some writing about this:

“We had never seen each other in our lives before, but the moment he saw me he said his heart was drawn out to me, and he had to come to me for work as I was the charginer cleaner. I wondered and wondered what his pursuits were and had as much conversation with him as possible. I found out he was very much in the world; and when I found out he was very much taken up with boxing, and even had entered into it as a professional boxer, I was horrified, as even in my unregenerate days this sport was very, very obnoxious to me. I spoke to him about it and the dreadful evil of it, and wrote letters to him, and tried to pray and pray for him. He was in my heart and thoughts continually; this was quite unknown to him, but not unknown to the Lord. He was knit to my heart, I believe, in love.

“The day came early in 1924 when I believe the Lord answered my poor breathings, and we started to converse together, and he then expressed a desire to come with me to Haydock chapel. My poor heart was full to the Lord. We started to go to the week evening services at Manchester in the time when Mr. Whitbread was pastor.”

Here Mr. Jones’s writings come to a close. It was at one of these week evening services where he was brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel. The merits of a precious Christ were so sweetly revealed to him as for him, though a sinner. We used to go to various week evening services—Hindley, Pemberton, Bolton, Liverpool occasionally, and once to Birkenhead, and had some profitable hearing times together.

My dear friend was led to walk in the ordinance of believer’s baptism in December, 1926. From 1926 to 1930 he was much exercised about bringing his widowed mother to live at Haydock with the hope that she would come to chapel and the Lord call her by grace. But O, it was proved to him that the Lord’s ways are not our ways and His thoughts not our thoughts. He obtained a house in 1930, but from then till 1937, when his mother died, it was seven years of persecution. It was opposition to him attending chapel right the way through. He told me he feared he had arranged a way of his own for the Lord to walk in. After he had lived alone till March, 1938, he felt he could no longer continue, and was led to ask his dear friends if he could make his home with them, to which we readily agreed.

Once on returning home from work at midnight, the Lord so sweetly drew near to him, and brought to his heart hymn 200—the words, “Ah but for free and sovereign grace,” etc. and the lines:

“But O, amazed, I see the hand  
That stopped me in my wild career.”

He could not help but weep before the Lord.

In February, 1960, he entered St. Helens Hospital for an operation. Whilst there he was favoured with a sweet visit from the Lord with the words Isaiah xxx. 20, 21. The affliction was sanctified to him.

He was by the grace of God a very sober and gracious man. He

truly gave of his time and substance to the cause of God at Haydock and also to the Dawson Bethesda Home, and fulfilled his office in a gracious way. After he retired from work in 1962, he loved to spend his time in whatever way he could for the house of God, and later the Home in its erection and after its opening. He was truly to me a brother beloved.

He became ill on Thursday, August 12th, 1971, having a seizure early in the morning which took the use of his right side. On Lord's day, August 15th, my dear wife, who nursed and attended to him continually, read a sermon by Mr. Caleb Sawyer to him (Psalm cvii. 43). He felt it to be good, and often repeated verse 17 of that Psalm: "Fools because of their iniquities are afflicted." Then he would point to himself and say, "That's me, that's me." On one occasion he had a sweet time during his illness. He told my wife it was as if he had been at the Lord's supper, and wept and said, "I am not worthy, I am not worthy." Then he was led to pray audibly, which was heard with sweetness.

After nearly five weeks nursing at home, it grieved us very much for him to go into hospital. It came to that point when we could no longer manage in our state of health, and with much felt sorrow we had to get him in. Never will I forget that journey when I went with him as he went into hospital on September 14th. Between us we visited him every day, and on one occasion I asked him what he would like me to read, but he made no reply. I felt led to read Isaiah xxxv and tried to pray. He said, "I have been begging of the Lord to direct you to a portion, and what a precious portion it was to my soul! The eighth verse—'though fools, shall not err therein'—was very comforting to me." To another friend he said:

"On Christ the solid Rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand."

He was very, very ill on Monday afternoon, October 10th, and only semi-conscious. I felt very sad he could not speak, and that he would never speak again to me. The only comfort was—it was well with him. Thus a bond of blessed union between us for 47 years, like David and Jonathan, had come to an end; but the blessed union he had with a precious Christ was completed on the Tuesday evening at 7.45 p.m., to be with Christ for ever and see Him without a cloud between.

On Saturday, October 16th, the funeral service was held at Haydock Chapel, followed by interment in St. Mark's Graveyard, in sure and certain hope and belief of the resurrection in Christ unto eternal life. We miss him greatly at the cause of truth at Haydock, but our loss is his eternal gain. D.T.E.

[Mr. Jones was a member of the Committee of the Gospel Standard Societies for 18 years. In public prayer he was very sweet. For many years he walked in close spiritual union with Mr. D. T. Evans, minister of the gospel. The way in which this close friendship began, and the blessed results of it (as related above), will be of great interest to many.]

**Sydney Rolph** died in the Lord on March 16th, 1972, aged 58. He was a cripple from his birth, being afflicted with infantile paralysis. At the age of ten he was put into a school at Colchester, where they got the best out of him. He returned home when he was 16 years old much improved. The Lord so blessed mother's soul when she took him to the school that, although it grieved her to part with him, she was made willing, trusting in the Lord to take care of him, hoping that he was a vessel of mercy, which later years proved to be his blessed case.

Sydney was more concerned and exercised about his soul when taken ill with angina after we came to Brighton and while living at the "Cottage," Bethesda, in 1960. It was during that illness that Hymn 462 was made very special to him, and also 143: "Rock of ages, shelter me." Not much

could be gathered from him during the next few years apart from his regular attendance at Galeed Chapel.

He went away for Christmas, 1969, and returned home February, 1970. All that year he was very poorly and in much distress of both body and soul. Hymn 977 was made very real to him, and he laboured much in soul agony, feeling what a wretch he was. The Lord came to him early one morning and delivered his soul in reading Isaiah xliii. 1, which was powerfully applied to him and made over to him: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, *thou art mine.*" Isaiah xliv. 22-23 was graciously applied bringing a soul-satisfying sense of blood-bought pardon. He seemed overwhelmed with God's goodness to him, and kept asking us to read it again, saying, "Praise the Lord, *He* has done it." During this time he enjoyed sweet fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, saying on one occasion. "They crowned Him with thorns"; "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head." "Here am I, a wretch like me on a lovely bed and a downy pillow, while He was crowned with thorns, all for me." Later he said, "Underneath are the everlasting arms, those kind, loving arms. He will never leave me or forsake me." "He has chosen me in the furnace of affliction."

He was much helped and supported as his affliction increased. He was taken to hospital in October where he underwent a major operation. He went to the theatre with the words: "Fear not, worm Jacob," and was in hospital seven weeks, during which time he was favoured with the Lord's sweet presence. His Bible and hymn book were always on his locker. On one occasion he asked the nurse to read Hymns 329 and 320; she remarked, "What lovely hymns!" His artless sincerity had quite an influence in the ward.

He made a partial recovery and was admitted to the Bethesda Home as he longed to be with the Lord's people and hear the relayed services, which were a comfort to him during the remainder of his life. He enjoyed Miss Parson's funeral service at the Home, and exclaimed, "What a lovely service! 'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'" Soon after this he was taken much worse, and confined to his room the last few weeks in much suffering, but his mind was stayed on God.

He then had some inward conflict, and feared lest after all he was not one of the Lord's children, and was brought very low in mind. The Wednesday service from Galeed was used to deliver him from all his fears—text Psalm lxxii. 12. He felt his feet once more upon the Rock. Freda, his sister, came down, and he was much in Isaiah liii, and spoke of Christ's sufferings as "all for such a wretch as me." Then he said, "I shall soon be round the throne of God, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing." Remembering his former worldliness he said, "With everlasting love has He drawn me. I used to love to go down on the front, and with the giddy crowds on the pier, but not now." One morning, bemoaning himself, he said, "In myself I am nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, but the Lord has taken them all away—precious Jesus, the chiefest among ten thousand, and I shall see His glory soon, 'when the work of grace is done; say, poor sinner, Lovest thou me?' Yes! I do love Him." Often he quoted his special hymn 462 and would finish very slowly: "Songs of praises, I will ever—ever give to thee." Speaking of the mansions in John xiv. he said how he longed to be there, saying, "I am being prepared for heaven, for that mansion. How lovely!" One evening during a power cut he said, "They can't put my light out; no darkness; need no candle."

Towards the end he said but little, and was brought very low in much suffering. His mind was stayed on his God, and he cried out in his sufferings: "Do come, dear Jesus, take me home, come Jesus, now,

now. I'm so weary." His end was peace. One gentle sigh, his fetters broke. As we looked on we truly felt: "The battle's o'er, the victory won, and with a shout to glory gone."

The family wish to leave on record their deep sense of gratitude to the Matron and staff of the Bethesda Home for the tender care and loving attention which was made such a comfort to him in the last stages of his pilgrimage.

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### THE LORD'S SMILE

If gazing strangers want to know  
 What makes me sing of Jesus so ;  
 I love His name, 'tis very dear,  
 And would His loveliness declare.  
     A single smile from Jesus given  
     Will lift a drooping soul to heaven.

His eyes are full of melting love,  
 More soft and sparkling than the dove;  
 And sweet instruction He conveys,  
 To warm my heart and guide my ways.  
     A single smile from Jesus given  
     Will lift a drooping soul to heaven.

No sinful taint His bosom knows,  
 But with amazing kindness glows;  
 He wrought a righteousness divine,  
 And gives me faith to call it mine.  
     A single smile from Jesus given  
     Will lift a drooping soul to heaven.

His mercies, like Himself, endure,  
 And, like His love, are ever sure ;  
 And as our eyes His worth can view,  
 Our heart will love and trust him too.  
     A single smile from Jesus given  
     Will lift a drooping soul to heaven.

John Berridge (1716-1793)

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As spices pounded, or precious ointment poured out, give their smell most, thus His Name was then as ointment poured forth, together with His blood, and filling heaven and earth with its sweet perfume, was a savour of rest and peace in both, appeasing the wrath of God, and so quieting the consciences of men. And even in this particular was it then most fragrant, in that all the torments of the cross and revilings of the multitude, which, as it were, racked Him for some answer, yet could draw no other from Him than this, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."  
*Leighton*

Every one that is justified hath not peace of conscience ; but every one that is justified hath peace with God.  
*Manton*

Hang about Him as well as you can.

*J. K. Popham*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

AUGUST, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## FOR LOVE'S SAKE

*Sermon preached by Mr. C. A. Wood at Scaynes Hill on Lord's Day, August 4th, 1968.*

**Text:** "For love's sake" (Philemon 9).

During our lives we receive many letters, some formal, some cold, though they may be to the point. But there are some letters that we receive from godly friends that express love, that breathe out the feelings of the writer. Those letters are precious. A godly deacon a long way from here once said to me, "There are certain letters which we receive that warm and touch our hearts; such letters seem to be wet with the tears of the one that wrote them." There are letters that trouble us, letters that burden us, letters that distress us, letters that as we read them we have to take to the Lord: "Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee." We spread the letter before the Lord. There are some who write (and it is very sad to say it) unkind letters. May we ever be kept from that; letters that hurt, letters that wound. May we be able to express in our letters that which is profitable, that which is spiritual. It is not the wording, it is not necessarily the hand writing; it is the spirit of the letter. I receive many letters, some from learned men, well written letters, but the all-important thing is the spirit of them. I receive some letters from unlearned men, and yet I perceive the spirit in which they are written.

This is a letter to Philemon. A diamond is a very precious thing. It is very small, but very valuable. There is a beauty to be seen in it. This little letter is like a diamond; it is small, but it is very precious. It is filled with love which is breathed out of the apostle's heart. It drops on every word.

In the first place we would like to examine this letter with you. The writer was Paul. He was a prisoner in Rome, in bonds for Christ's sake. His bonds never caused him to forget or neglect those dear saints to whom he had once ministered. His chains, his sufferings, and the nearness of his end, did not cause inactivity, nor neglect in prayer, or in writing, or sending words of counsel to the churches. He is writing here to a dear saint of God, a fellow labourer. The apostle makes mention in his letter of many ministers of the gospel. I know we may read of some of them only once in the Word of God, but he speaks of them, whether great or small, as labourers together, and fellow soldiers. This is the spirit

for the ministers. It is not of envy, but of love, and it is seeking to labour together in the fear of the Lord for the glory of God, and for the good of His people.

Philemon had a church in his house. Doubtless he was wealthy, for we read he had servants (or slaves); and it is quite evident that he would call all that dwelt in his house, and those in the locality to come and worship in his house. Among them was a slave called Onesimus. I think he cared not for the things that were spoken, for the blessed truths of the gospel; for one day he wronged his master, he stole that which was not his, turned his back on the kind master, and on that Christian home, and like the prodigal went away to spend his substance in riotous living. He went a long way; he went to Rome. How, or in what way he was brought under the sound of the ministry of the apostle Paul, we know not. The Scripture is silent as to this. But this we know: he was brought under that ministry, and a wonderful change was wrought in his heart by the Spirit. Some of you have been attending this chapel for years. What has it done for you? Is there a change wrought in your heart? Is the gospel the power of God unto salvation to your soul? Have your eyes been opened? Are you born again? Have you been quickened by the power of His Spirit? Has the entrance of His Word given light? Has the Word as good seed entered into your heart, been springing up, bringing forth fruit to the glory of God? Where there is the grace of God, there is a great change. So he, Onesimus, who before was unprofitable, now by the grace of God and the change wrought in his heart, is profitable.

Why should the apostle write concerning this young man? Onesimus was to return to the home from which he had come, to the master whom he had wronged. But he was not sent without a word, a loving word, and so the dear apostle writes (and my friends, the words he uses are very touching): "Being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (verse 9). Look what love does! He does not say, "Now because I am Paul, an apostle, and the prisoner of Jesus Christ, you *must* take him back." He did not exert any authority as such; but rather, moved by love, he beseeches Philemon for this one that has wronged him. Paul would have kept Onesimus for himself, but he would not without permission from Philemon, so he sent him back desiring that he should be received "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (verse 16). He adds, "If he has wronged thee, or he oweth thee ought, put that on my account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it; albeit, I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (verses 18-19). I am sure that this young man was received back with joy and forgiveness into that Christian home, and no doubt was made useful in the church of God. "And

you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins"; once without God, without hope, without Christ, as we read.

"But now subdued by sovereign grace,  
My spirit longs for Thine embrace."

What is the secret of this love? Why is this love so powerful? Why is it such a sacred love? Why is it so active? This love is not found in nature's barren soil.

Let us now examine this, "Yet for love's sake." Here is a greater love than any earthly love. The dear apostle writes and prays in another place, "That ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." What a word! What a depth! What a gospel! What love is this! How can a poor sinner such as I attempt to set it forth? It is inexpressible; it is immeasurable; it is eternal; it is unchangeable—the love of God to sinners.

Consider first the love of God the Father. How great is that love! "For His great love wherewith He has loved us"—His great love, and that love being so manifested in the gift of His dear Son. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As the prophet sets it forth, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." My dear friends, do you know something of this everlasting love? You might well say, "It is so great; I am such a sinner. O could it be that I am one of these eternally loved?" The sweet evidence of it is this, "With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Poor sinners loved with His love will be *drawn* by it. This love will conquer them, this love will draw them, this love will lead them in. O what wondrous love is this! The apostle John—and we do think so much of him as a disciple of love—sets it forth, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Love! Wonderful love! The love of God! Further, this love is made known sometimes in His chastening. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." The love of God to poor sinners is sometimes made known and confirmed as the Lord is pleased to correct His children. Yet love is inscribed on the rod. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."

Then consider the love of the Saviour. O my friends, what love is this! "Having loved His own which were in the world,

He loved them unto the end." What an end it was! It took Him to Calvary. He laid down His life for poor sinners. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." O think on it, my friends. Has it brought you to His feet?

"On such love, my soul, still ponder,  
Love so great, so rich, so free;  
Say, whilst lost in holy wonder,  
Why, O Lord, such love to me?"

O what wondrous love! The apostle Paul could say, "By the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." In another place he writes, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

But how is this known in a sinner's heart? By the power and teaching of the Holy Spirit, as we read, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Without that we are destitute. But the Lord by His Spirit is pleased to bring it. The taste of pardoning love, O how rich, how great it is!

But now, what is the effect upon these sinners loved by God with this eternal, unchanging love? Why, it will be seen in their life. We are told by the apostle, "We love Him because He first loved us." A sweet evidence of the love of God towards us, is this, that we love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are enabled to say with dear Peter, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and to say with another,

"Lord, it is my chief complaint,  
That my love is cold and faint,  
Yet I'd love Thee, and adore,  
O for grace to love Thee more!"

Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ will seek Him, praying for His presence, will draw near to Him, will come as poor guilty sinners pleading for pardon, seeking forgiveness, weeping over sin, looking on Him whom they have pierced. The objects of His love will be found at His dear feet. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them."

The Lord was asked by a proud pharisee to come into his house, and while He was there, there came a woman into the room where Jesus was. She did not speak, she stood behind Him, and then she wept, and washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. "Oh," said the pharisee, "this man if He were a prophet would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner." My friends, the gospel is for poor sinners. He is mighty to save. He is able to save to the uttermost vile sinners. And if you know something of your sinnership, if the Holy Spirit works in your heart, you will feel to be vile. You will not look on anyone else and say, "There goes a greater sinner than I." You may have been saved from

grosser sins, but what about your heart? We are caused to sigh and say, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" You will feel to be the vilest of sinners; yet, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Do you know something of this venturing to the Lord in love, in humility, in fear, in much trembling, in many castings down, distresses, and burdens?

"To whom, dear Jesus, O to whom  
Shall needy sinners flee  
But to Thyself, who bidst us come?  
Our springs are all in Thee."

"Yet for love's sake." Mary Magdalene weeps because she loved Him. O how she loved her dear Lord, and how she tarried at the sepulchre! But the Lord came to her. He appeared and spoke to her, and it was just one word. He called her by her name. It was heaven in her soul, it was all she wanted, and she dropped at His feet. "Rabboni, which is to say, Master." His love of His people, poor sinners, brought Him from heaven to a death we cannot speak of, and yet we love to tell to sinners of that death He died.

"Such a cruel death He died,  
He was hung up and crucified;  
And those kind hands which did such good,  
They nailed them to a cross of wood."

But one also said,

"What glad returns can I impart  
For favours so divine?  
O take my all, this worthless heart,  
And make it wholly Thine."

"For love's sake." My friends, do we know what it is to be emptied of self? Do we love Jesus more than all?

"Jesus, engrave it on my heart  
That Thou the one thing needful art;  
I could from all things parted be,  
But never, never, Lord, from Thee."

I have often spoken of the little slave in Africa many years ago in the slave market to be sold. A kind gentleman passed by; he had compassion on her, and enquired the price. He paid the price, and went up to the little girl and said, "I have paid for you; you are free." She clung to him, and said, "I am not free; I am yours, always yours, You have paid for me; I will serve you always." My friends,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small,  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my heart, my life, my all."

"For love's sake." "If ye love Me keep My commandments."

“Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?” Some of us will hope at the end of this service to come to the Lord’s table. May it be for love’s sake. May we see the sweet evidence in the bread and wine as tokens, in memory of His death, of the broken body and blood shed for poor sinners “for love’s sake.” Having some sweet hope: “Yes, Lord, for me, for me Thou didst come, for love’s sake.” And that we may come, though so sinful, for love’s sake. Yes, we would love Him, we would remember Him. Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of Me.” “For love’s sake.”

If the Lord Jesus is made precious to us, we shall love those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. We are comforted with such a word as this, “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” Precious word is that. It does not mean because you are a Strict Baptist and attend this chapel, and have a love to the friends, that you will go to heaven. No, it is by grace ye are saved. But the sweet evidence of that love of God in our heart will give a sweet union to the people of God for love’s sake.

“ I love to meet among them now,  
And at Thy gracious feet to bow,  
Though vilest of them all.”

Then further, it will give you a love for the Word of God, for the doctrines of grace. You will love the truth, and will love men of truth for the truth’s sake. Now what kind of love is that which is exercised by the people of God, or should be exercised? We hear much today of some who would make all one in a way of compromise: “Let us be one, and show a spirit of love.” My friends, that is not the spirit of true love. The apostle was very fond of the Philippians; they were constantly in his heart. He said, “And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more *in knowledge and in all judgment*: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” He prayed that their love might abound more and more. This we would pray too, that there might be this love in our heart to the Lord, and to one another. But it must not be at any price. It must not be love to the compromising of error, or of evil. Real love will be firm; it will stand fast; it will hold fast to good and right things; it will speak firmly and yet lovingly against that which is wrong. Fathers and mothers with their children sometimes may exercise, as they think, love to their children, and let their children do what they want. They say, “I love my children so much I will let them have their own way.” That is not good for the child, it is not indeed. On the other hand some may say, “I love them so much I bring them up under stern discipline.” There is something lacking in that also. It means this: love that is firm, and yet kind and tender, and as the apostle

says, "In knowledge and in all judgment." That your love may be tempered with this blessed knowledge, that is a right understanding in matters, especially the things of God. "And in all judgment"—that there might be a right loving judgment exercised for love's sake. If we are moved by the love of Christ in our heart we shall keep close to what is right, and in a right spirit. We may love the Lord Jesus Christ, and take a right stand in a right way, and yet with all that, we may lack the spirit of love in the way that we make a stand. In these things we need great grace. "That ye may approve things that are excellent" (Margin: "That ye may try things that differ"). That we might discern that which is of the flesh, and that of the Spirit; that which is of darkness, and that of light; that which is empty profession, and that which is true; that which is formal and dead from that which is real; that which is artificial, and that which is living; that it might be done in love. "Yet for love's sake." O may this spirit of discernment in the spirit of love, and in firmness, be contended for here earnestly, but not contentiously. If we have the love of Christ shed abroad in our heart, the love of the truth, and have a sweet sense of the love of God to us unworthy sinners, it will give a right spirit to speak lovingly, kindly, and yet firmly, to those that are without. "For love's sake." This is not such an easy path after all, is it?

Now I want to pursue one other matter, and leave it with you. "For love's sake." We have spoken of the love of God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit to His people, and of the unspeakably sweet taste of the love of God to His people, and the love they have to one another. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." But what kind of love have you one to the other? Are you willing to help them, and to walk that extra mile, if need be, for love's sake? If your heart is touched with the love of Christ, your pocket may be emptied for the sake of one you love, not pharisaically, not hypocritically. What amount have you given away of your substance? "Your Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." It may be visiting one who is sick. It may help them on their way. "For love's sake." It may be to administer some help, to go and speak a word one to another, "for love's sake." O that we might know more of this, that the spirit of Christ might be seen in our hearts and lives, that we might do what we can to manifest this love one to another, walking together in love. And you know for love's sake you will not mind scrubbing the chapel out if you are called upon to do it. You will not mind taking a low place, or doing the smallest task. You will esteem it a privilege to do this. I believe many a chapel keeper has been blessed; many a one has been labouring in this work lovingly. As we go into a chapel, we can see where love is. "For love's sake."

It will make you willing to take the smallest place, and do small duties, for love's sake.

I have to take you another step. It will make you say, "Sorry." I am quite free to speak as I am quite a stranger to most here. I knew a godly minister, who was so upset; he was going to use the rod in his own spirit. On the way the Lord met him, broke him down, touched him with this love. The text he thought to speak from was gone, and this was the text: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." What he would say was all gone; he was so blessed, and so were the hearers. All was forgiven — love — love, sweet unity. That is what we want. And love will touch the hardest heart, break it down, make us to confess our faults—and we have many. I have. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

I want to take you another step. Think of what the Saviour did, for whom He died—the children of darkness. "Love your enemies," those that smite you, those that wound you, those that hurt you. Go on your knees and try to pray for them. My friends, try and pray for them for love's sake. "Father, forgive them," said the Lord, "they know not what they do." O for grace thus to do!

Lastly, you remember in Matthew xxv it is recorded, at the last day when the King shall come, when the books will be opened, the Shepherd of the sheep, the Head of the church, will say to them on the right hand, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Not that entry into heaven is gained by all these good works. Never! But my friends, this is the fruit of the Spirit, the blessed evidence of the work of grace in the heart, that by this constraining power of His love they went forth. "Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee? Or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." You might say, "But I cannot go to the prison." My friend, you might not be called literally to visit the prison. I admire any who are rightly used to do it, to speak a word; but sometimes the Lord's people are in prison. I do not mean in the way Peter was

in a literal prison, but sometimes the Lord's people are in a dark place, shut up. Do not sing songs to a heavy heart, but pray your way there; pray that the Lord will give you a word as you visit that one. It may be you will be used of the Lord to give a little lift to them in the prison. Paul said, "Ye were not ashamed of me in my bonds."

"Yet for love's sake." Amen.

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### COMING AS A SINNER TO CHRIST

*From a treatise "Of Communion with God" by John Owen (1616-1683)*

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1. They seriously consider, and by faith conquer all objections to the contrary, that Jesus Christ, by the will and appointment of the Father, hath really undergone the punishment that was due to those sins that lie now under His eye and consideration. He hath as certainly answered the justice of God for them as if he himself, the sinner, should at that instance be cast into hell.

2. They hearken to the voice of Christ calling them to Him with their burden: "Come unto Me, ye that are weary and heavy laden." Come with your burdens; come thou (poor soul) with thy guilt of sin. Why, what to do? Why, this is Mine, saith Christ, this agreement I made with My Father, that I should come, and take thy sins and bear them away; they were My lot. Give Me thy burden, give Me all thy sins; thou knowest not what to do with them, I know how to dispose of them well enough, so that God shall be glorified and thy soul delivered. Hereupon,

3. They lay down their sins at the cross of Christ, upon His shoulders; this is faith's great and bold venture upon the grace, faithfulness and truth of God; to stand by the cross and say, Ah! He is bruised for my sins and wounded for my transgressions, and the chastisement of my peace is upon Him. He is thus made sin for me. Here I give up my sins to Him that is able to bear them, to undergo them. He requires it of my hands that I should be content that He should undertake for them, and that I heartily consent unto. This is every day's work; I know not how any peace can be maintained with God without it. If it be the work of souls to receive Christ as made sin for us, we must receive Him as One that takes our sins upon Him. Not as though He died any more or suffered any more; but as the faith of the saints of old made that present and done before their eyes, not yet come to pass (Heb. xi. 1), so now faith makes that present, which was accomplished and past many generations ago. This it is to know Christ crucified.

4. Having thus by faith given up their sins to Christ, and

seen God laying them all on Him, they draw nigh and take from Him that righteousness which He hath wrought out for them, so fulfilling the whole of that of the apostle: "He was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." They consider Him tendering Himself and His righteousness to be their righteousness before God; they take it, and accept of it, and complete this blessed exchange of faith. Anger, curse, wrath, death, sin as to its guilt, He took it all, and takes it all away; with Him we leave whatever of this nature belongs to us, and from Him we receive love, life, righteousness and peace.

*Objection:* But it may be said, Surely this course of procedure can never be acceptable to Jesus Christ. What! Shall we daily come to Him with our filth, our guilt, our sins? May He not, will He not, bid us to keep them to ourselves? They are our own; shall we be always giving sins and taking righteousness?

*Answer:* There is not anything that Jesus Christ is more delighted with than that His saints should always hold communion with Him as to this business of giving and receiving. For,

1. This exceedingly honours Him and gives Him the glory that is His due; many indeed cry, Lord, Lord, and make mention of Him, but honour Him not at all. How so? They take His work out of His hands and ascribe it unto other things; their repentance, their duties, shall bear their iniquities. They do not *say* so, but they *do* so. The commutation they make, if they make any, is with themselves. All their bartering about sin is in and with their own souls. The work that Christ came to do in the world was to bear our iniquities, and lay down His life a ransom for our sins. The cup He had to drink was filled with our sins, as to the punishment due to them. What greater dishonour then can be done to the Lord Jesus than to ascribe this work to anything else; to think to get rid of our sins any other way or means. Herein then, I say, Christ is honoured indeed when we go to Him with our sins by faith, and say unto Him, Lord, this is Thy work; this is that for which Thou camest into the world; this is that Thou hast undertaken to do; Thou callest for my burden which is too heavy for me to bear; take it, blessed Redeemer; Thou tenderest Thy righteousness, that is my portion. Then is Christ honoured, then is the glory of mediation ascribed to Him, when we walk with Him in this communion.

2. This exceedingly endears the souls of the saints to Him, and constrains them to put a due valuation upon Him, His righteousness and grace. When they find and have the daily use of it, then they do it. Who would not love Him? I have been with the Lord Jesus, may the poor soul say; I have left my sins, my burden with Him, and He hath given me His righteousness, where-with I am going with boldness to God. I was dead and am alive,

for He died for me; I was cursed and am blessed, for He was made a curse for me: I was troubled but have peace, for the chastisement of my peace was upon Him; I knew not what to do, nor whither to cause my sorrow to go; by Him have I received joy unspeakable and glorious. If I do not love Him, delight in Him, obey Him, live to Him, die for Him, I am worse than the devils in hell. Now the great aim of Christ in the world is to have a high place and esteem in the hearts of His people; to have there (as He hath in Himself) the preeminence in all things; not to be jostled up and down among other things; to be all, and in all. And thus are the saints of God prepared to esteem Him upon the engaging themselves to this communion with Him.

*Objection:* Yea, but you will say, If this be so, what need we to repent or amend our ways. It is but going to Christ by faith, making this exchange with Him, and so we may sin that grace may abound?

*Answer:* I judge no man's person; but this I must needs say, that I do not understand how a man that makes this objection in cold blood, not under a temptation or accidental darkness, can have any real or true acquaintance with Jesus Christ. However, this I am certain of, that this communion in itself produces quite other effects than those supposed. For,

1. For repentance. It is, I suppose, a gospel repentance that is intended. For a legal bondage repentance full of dread, amazement, terror, self-love, astonishment at the presence of God, I confess this communion takes it away, prevents it, casts it out, with its bondage and fear; but for gospel repentance, whose nature consists in godly sorrow for sin, with its relinquishment, proceeding from faith, love and abhorrency of sin on account of Father, Son and Spirit, both law and love, that this should be hindered by this communion is not possible. I told you that the foundation of this communion is laid in a deep, serious, daily consideration of sin, its guilt, vileness and abomination, and our own vileness on that account; that a sense hereof is to be kept alive in and upon the heart of every one that will enjoy this communion with Christ; without it Christ is of no value or esteem to him. Now is it possible that a man should daily fill his heart with thoughts of the vileness of sin on all considerations whatever, of law, love, grace, gospel, life and death, and be filled with self-abhorrency on this account, and yet be a stranger to godly sorrow? Here is the mistake; the foundation of this communion is laid in that which they suppose it overthrows.

2. But what shall we say for obedience? If Christ be so glorified and honoured by taking our sins, the more we bring to Him the more will He be glorified. A man could not suppose that this objection would be made, but that the Holy Ghost, who knows

what is in man and his heart, hath made it for them and in their name (Rom. vi. 1-3). The very same doctrine that I have insisted on being delivered (v. 18-20), the same objection is made to it; and for those who think it may have any weight, I refer them to the answer given in that chapter by the apostle, as also to what was said before to the necessity of our obedience, notwithstanding the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

But you will say, How should we address ourselves to the performance of this duty? What path are we to walk in?

Faith exercises itself in it especially in three ways:

1. In meditation. The heart goes over in its own thoughts the part above insisted on, sometimes severally, sometimes jointly, sometimes fixing primarily on one thing, sometimes on another, and sometimes going over the whole. At one time perhaps, the soul is most upon consideration of its own sinfulness, and filling itself with shame and self-abhorrency on that account; sometimes it is filled with the thoughts of the righteousness of Christ, and with joy unspeakable and glorious on that account. Especially on great occasions when grieved and burdened by negligence or eruption of corruption, then the soul goes over the whole work, and so drives things to an issue with God, and takes up the peace that Christ hath wrought out for him.

2. In considering and inquiring into the promises of the gospel, which holds out all these things: the excellency, fulness and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ, the rejection of all false righteousness, and the commutation made in the love of God, which formerly was insisted on.

3. In prayer. Herein do their souls go through this work day by day; and this communion have all the saints with the Lord Jesus as to their acceptation with God.

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### **GOD'S PEOPLE KNOWN BY THEIR DESIRES**

*From Thomas Manton on Isaiah liii*

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We are taught the difference between God's people and carnal men. To God's people Christ is all their desire; to carnal persons there is nothing desirable in Him. It is good to observe their several verdicts of Him. "To you that believe He is precious, but to them that be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." To the world He is base and ignominious: "A worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." To the spouse, glorious and full of allurements: "Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips." To the world He appeared deformed and contemptible: "Many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men"; but quite contrary

to the spouse: "My beloved is the fairest of ten thousand." The Hebrew word signifieth an ensign-bearer. In the world's view there is no form nor comeliness in Him; He is without beauty. To the spouse He is "altogether lovely."

Well, then, you see here is the true differencing note between us and the men of the world, whether we see anything in Christ why we should desire Him. And it is both an inclusive and an exclusive mark. Some marks are inclusive; that is, if a man find them in him, he may be sure he is in Christ; but if not, he is not to determine he is out of Christ. As the eminent and vigorous workings of holy graces, they do not take in every state of Christianity, they do not take in the infancy of grace. Other marks are exclusive; that is thus, they knock off the fingers of pretenders, and serve to show a man out of grace, but not in. As frequenting of the ordinances, a care of duty; if a man doth not these things, he may be sure he is none of God's though he cannot be sure he is of God because he doth them.

But now this is a mark that is inclusive and exclusive too. It is inclusive, for if your desires be to Christ, no doubt He is yours. It is a true mark, and a mark that is compatible to the weakness of grace. It is a true mark, for God looketh to the heart more than to the duty: "My son, give Me thy heart." And desires are the chiefest part of that. Desires are most genuine and suitable to the judgment and determination of the soul. They are a mark in which God's weakest servants may comfort themselves. Those that fail in other things are not wanting in desires. However they may have many defects in their carriage and in their duties, yet they are sure their desires are towards Him. If they cannot be much in duty, they will be much in their desires and valuations of Him. Peter, that durst not appeal to his own conscience for other things, dareth appeal to God's omniscieny for this: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." And the people of God often vouch this: "The desire of our soul is to Thy name" (Isa. xxvi. 8); "Thy servants who desire to fear Thy name" (Neh. i. 11). Therefore it is comfortable, and it is convincing too, and exclusive.

Wicked men feel no desires; they have some slight wishes, carnal and weak wishes, but they have no serious desires, nor true volitions. Balaam may wish to die the death of the righteous (Num. xxiii. 10). So they may desire Christ out of some general conceit of happiness; but they do not desire Christ for holiness. So there is no beauty in Him why they should desire Him. They do not desire Him as seeing any beauty in His ways. "Lord, evermore give us this bread." When Christ said He was the Bread of life, those that would not come to Christ would fain have the Bread of life. Nay, heaven itself is not really desired by wicked men; it is true, they may desire it in a carnal way, as a Turkish paradise,

and such a place of ease and delight as the Alcoran sets forth; but not as it is in itself, to enjoy God, and Christ, and more grace, and to be more free and undisturbed in respect of the prevailing of sin and corruptions.

Those that desire Christ truly, desire Him not for ease (the spirit of the world may do that), but from the beauty and excellency they find in Him, and in His ways. His service is of a high and honourable nature, and therefore they desire it. So that you see here is the note of trial, and the main difference, viz. a desiring of Christ for the rare beauty and perfections that are found in Him. Do you, then, try yourselves by this note. But that you may not deceive yourselves in this matter, I will give you a few notes. I will not speak anything of the cause of desires. A high value and price set upon Christ, and a seeing rich beauties in Him, of that I shall speak in the next verse. I shall only treat now of the effects of this desire. If it be earnest and strong after Him, it will be manifested by these things.

1. *A holy impatency in the want of Christ.* When we strongly desire a thing, the heart fainteth under the want of it. Amnon was sick for Tamar (2 Sam. xiii. 1-4). And the spouse was sick of love for Christ (Cant. v. 8). The soul languishes with a holy desire of the sense of His mercy, with a longing after pardon and grace, and quickening, and life, and what is to be found in Christ. They can find no rest in themselves till they do enjoy it. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so doth my soul pant after Thee, O God." Thirst is the most implacable impression that can be upon the body; the creature cannot be quiet till it be quenched. Now, of all creatures the hart is most thirsty by nature, and the thirst is mightily increased when it is hunted. And mark, it is the she-hart for so the Seventy read it: "The she-hart panteth after the water brooks." As the she-hart panteth when chased, such a rage of thirst was there in his soul till it were satisfied with God, and refreshed with the comforts of Jesus Christ. Search then for such a restless and strong desire; try if there be such an ardency and earnestness upon your affections that nothing can satisfy but Christ, that you cannot be quiet till you have Him. Was your heart never chased into a panting for the water brooks? Some are haunted so by the ghastly apprehensions of God's wrath that they have no ease, no rest. But certainly all that love Christ are chased into a panting; they have such a sense of their sins and miseries that their souls are put into an earnest expectation of the mercies of Christ.

2. *A holy indignation.* Passions usually serve and accompany one another. If there be a holy desire, there will be a holy anger. And this is at two things:

i. *At anything that would rival the affection.*

ii. *At what would hinder the enjoyment of the object.*

i. *At anything that would rival Christ in the affection.* There

is a scorn that anything should come in competition with Him, that we should have so much as a thought that anything were worthy but Christ: "I count all things but loss and dung that I may win Christ." Any outward excellency in comparison of Him is but dog's meat. It thinketh the worst name good enough for anything that shall come in competition with Him. And in such a case gold is not gold, but dog's meat, honour is not honour, pleasure is not pleasure, but all is dung and dog's meat. You know in a natural way things have their due respect from us, till they be compared with what we dearly love and prize; then no term is bad enough for them. So here, the soul doth even abhor the thought that Christ and other things should be spoken of the same day, which otherwise might have fairer respects and valuations from the soul. It is worth your observation to see how the saints do abominate the thought that anything should be supposed to satisfy them without or besides Christ. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us." O Lord, do not think we are of that strain. It is the many, the men of the multitude, that think so; they speak as if they would not own such an unworthy thought, nor entertain any resolution to prostitute their desires to any sensual good. If they should have all things else, it is irksome to them to think they should be contented, as Austin crieth out, "Thyself, Lord, Thyself, Lord." They are angry with themselves if any pleasing thought should arise any other way, any vain conceit, that they should be happy apart from God and Christ. It is an excellent saying of one, They had rather mourn for God than delight without Him. All their comforts are irksome to them if they have not Christ with them. Try, then, is there such a zealous indignation against false thoughts in your comforts? In what case do you think yourselves? "Happy is the people that is in such a case." If that be a thought that is pleasing to your minds, it is a good sign.

*ii. Indignation against what hindereth the enjoyment of the object.* A man is angry with what cometh between him and his desires. If your desires be to Christ, you will be angry with your perverse hearts that keep you from Him. When a man desireth to sin, he is angry with God because He cometh in with His law, and steppeth between us and our desires. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be." So when the desires are set and bent upon Christ, a man is angry with himself that he is so clogged and weighed down with the flesh that he cannot enjoy such full communion with Him as he desires. "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." And David crieth out, "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!"—my pilgrimage is prolonged. They are angry with their own base hearts, that still there is such a strangeness between them and Christ.

**PREACHING THE GOSPEL**  
*From Thomas Manton on Isaiah liii*

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Is the gospel the arm and power of God? Then:

1. *Be not ashamed of it, but preach it boldly.* Paul saith, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Many are ashamed of the naked simplicity of the gospel, and therefore hanker the more after profound parts and human learning. You must imitate Christ. Preach boldly, as having authority from Him.

2. *Wait for the success of it.* Doubt of success is a great discouragement, and taketh off the wheels of a man's ministry. Refer it to God; it is His own arm. If it cannot be mighty through us, it will be mighty through God: "I have put My words in thy mouth." It is a great lesson of holy wisdom, if we could learn it, to mind duty, and refer the success to God.

3. *Dispense it faithfully;* use not God's arm for our own ends. There is a preaching the gospel out of envy (Phil. i. 16). This is a putting God in a servility to our designs, a prostituting of the greatest power to the vilest uses, an embasing a thing beneath its office.

4. *Dispense it so as to look to the Spirit to make it effectual;* think not to make it work by our own fancies: "My preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." A minister may be apt to be too full of self. The old Adam may be too hard for young Melancthon [referring to what Luther said to his friend, Philip Melancthon]. It is said of Christ (Luke xxiv. 32) that "He opened the Scriptures"; and (verse 45), "Then He opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures."

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God accomplisheth His greatest designs by the most unlikely and despised means. Thus the Almighty goeth to war against Pharaoh with flies and frogs and lice, the most putrid of all living creatures. The Moabites were put to flight before the Israelites by a fancy, to wit, the sun shining upon the water, which they thought to be blood. Pope Adrian was choked with a gnat. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." And what was that? Nothing but a little rain and hail, as Josephus witnesseth; for as they drew to battle there fell suddenly a storm of rain and hail just in their faces that they could not see. *Manton*

Sin is that mark at which all the arrows of divine vengeance are shot. *Goodwin*

Every breath we draw without pain is more than we deserve. *J. K. Popham*

## THE ASCENSION

*From the writings of F. W. Krummacher  
(translated from the German)*

But what happened beyond the cloud which concealed the risen Saviour from mortal eyes? This has not remained entirely shrouded in mystery. In other passages of holy Scripture, and more especially in the Revelation of the apostle John, the veil has been raised. We there see far beyond that cloud; and O what glory beams upon us there!

We behold the shining hosts of angels hastening to meet the approaching King with loud exultant songs of homage, and the old word of prophecy is verified: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." We see the companies of the just made perfect, whom no man can number, at the gates of the holy city fall down and worship the glorified Mediator, and we hear them shout their Hallelujahs to Him from the inmost depths of their grateful hearts. And He, with gracious salutations passing through their midst, approaches the throne of the everlasting Father. And in the hand of the latter, the Ancient of Days, is seen a book written within and without, and sealed with seven seals. And a strong angel approaches, proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book" (it is the book of God's decrees) "and to loose the seals thereof?" And no being equal to the task is found, either in heaven or on earth. And one of the four and twenty elders standing around the throne takes up the word, and says, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And the everlasting Son, the great High Priest, approaches, and takes the scroll out of the hand of Him that sits upon the throne. Then the elders, with their harps and vials full of odours, fall down worshipping before Him who is both Priest and Lamb in one, and they sing the new song, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." And a chorus of many thousand angel voices with triumphant joy confirm the same, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And like a rushing of many waters, the loud Amen resounds throughout the holy city. And behold, He who was like unto the Son of Man takes possession of the seat of honour prepared for Him at the right hand of the Father on the throne of universal dominion, opens the seals of the wondrous book, and "the pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand."

Here, then, some of those things that transpired beyond the

cloud are disclosed to your view. It is, indeed, disclosed in typical representation; but that which is thus rendered intelligible to our poor human comprehension is nevertheless real and actual. In this exaltation of Him who was fairer than the children of men we rejoice, in the first place, on His own account; but do not forget in how exceeding joyous a sense we also share in this His triumph. In Him who is thus so highly exalted, we are to see, not merely the Son of God, but likewise the second Adam, our Advocate, Surety, and Representative. On the day of His ascension, He took possession of heaven, not only for Himself, but also for us. Remember the mysterious relation in which He had entered with us, and the wonderful exchange which He had made with us. By imputation, He assumed our guilt as well as our obligations. Having done so, heaven was, by His own admission, closed even against Himself whilst in this state of humiliation. The cherub stationed at the gate of paradise refused even Him admission, for he saw that His entrance into it was likewise coupled with the indispensable condition that He, in our stead, should, under a thousand severe trials, yield perfect satisfaction to the inflexible law, and at the same time should suffer and die to expiate those sins on account of which the curse of the law rested on His people. He had accomplished both when, on the cross, bowing His head in death, He uttered the triumphant exclamation, "It is finished." Every barrier was now removed, and the gate of the holy city was once more open before Him. He entered into heaven, not merely, however, as the only-begotten Son of the Father, but as the Man who had become Surety, and who had paid all that was due. Since the obligations which He fulfilled were ours, the right of entrance into the world of glory awarded Him was likewise so to us. He took possession of heaven for us—that is, for as many of us as are become one with Him—and for us He ever holds it, constantly interceding for us before the Father with His own righteousness.

"But by what road may we hope to enter into this heavenly Jerusalem?" This no longer need excite our solicitude. It lies indeed through the dark valley of death; but though without human attendant, it is not solitary, neither are we left alone. You already know what a prospect the Lord revealed to His disciples in His farewell address to them. After the assurance that He was going to prepare mansions for them, He said: "And if I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And what happened to the disciples on the Mount of Olives, whilst with adoring astonishment they gazed after their ascending Master? "Behold," the narrative informs us, "two men stood by them in white apparel," shining angels, "which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

These words referred, indeed, first of all to a remote future, and announced that the Prince of Peace should one day visibly return to consummate His kingdom upon earth. But nevertheless the disciples were justified in accepting it as a promise for their last hour, as though our Lord had addressed them as would a mother, when starting on a journey, saying to her little ones who sorrowfully look on, "Be happy! I am not going away for ever; I am coming back, and shall see you again very soon." And, doubtless, He will appear at the very time when the anxiety of our hearts shall be the most intense; and then, although unseen, in a manner never before experienced, shall we realise His presence and help. It may be that at the very entrance to the harbour a storm shall try our faith. But even if a great struggle should take place at the separation of soul and body, still, how is it possible that we should not come off easy victors, if in the last conflict we hear His greetings, and recognise His hand as that which soothes our last suffering? And were that hour arrived when our weeping friends, standing around our bed, shall whisper to each other, "He has breathed his last—he has ceased to struggle"; then we too shall have commenced that journey, which we here have seen undertaken by our great Forerunner.

And when our earthly tabernacle is consigned to its last resting-place — a "seed sown of God to ripen unto the day of the harvest"—then shall we already have entered the golden streets of the eternal heavenly city, led by the hand of our Redeemer. And that which surrounds us there is not some strange and unknown world, in which we feel like lost and deserted children; but our arrival there will be as our return home from travel to meet again father and mother, brothers and sisters. Just as, at our birth into this world, we found the place in every respect prepared for us—the little cradle ready standing there, shelter, food, and clothing all provided, while father and mother welcomed us most cordially—in like manner shall we find everything in the heavenly world in a state most perfectly prepared for us. We have long been known there; we have long been called by our name and expected with joy. And we may believe that we shall feel infinitely more at home in the beautiful world, free from night and sin, than we ever were whilst upon this earth; and there will be inscribed upon every joy that we there experience, and on every association in which we feel our happiness involved, the one precious word—the word *eternal*. There will be no more occasion to complain. "This it is that pains me, that it is that vexes me, that I cannot sufficiently love Thee"; but our heart will overflow with fervour, and we shall never want breath to unite with our fellows in glory and happiness, in singing to our full heart's desire the great hallelujah in His praise, who has loved us so far beyond all expression, and who has so exalted us.

## THE SANCTUARY

*Prayer meeting address given by Mr. C. H. Frost at Rehoboth Chapel, Swindon, on Monday evening, 26th May, 1952.*

**Reading:** Exodus xxv. 1-9

Very soon after the Lord had delivered His people out of the land of Egypt, soon after they had seen the Egyptians dead upon the seashore, the Lord set up His worship. They were not long left without ways and means of serving and worshipping God; and as His people dwelt in tents, so, in order to be amongst them, would the Lord God also dwell in a tent. There has always seemed to me something so very wonderful in God in this matter. He had a people in the wilderness, a people entirely dependent upon Himself, a people whom He had delivered, whom He had promised to bless; and so the Lord God would dwell among them.

The days are not entirely gone, are they, when the Lord God condescends to dwell amongst, with, and in His people? We live in a very different day from that in which these lived; ours is a gospel day; and yet how do we feel to need the Lord to condescend to dwell in our midst, in our hearts, and to commune with us from time to time.

Though the Lord provided all the means, yet He would have the children of Israel bring a willing offering. The only willingness that would be accepted was that a man should give it willingly with his heart; and God said to Moses, "Of him ye shall take My offering." He will never be any the worse off for it; he will never regret giving an offering to the Lord with a willing heart; he shall have the comfort and blessing of an understanding that, when I do dwell in the sanctuary with them, he, under Myself, has helped to make that sanctuary." It was nothing haphazard. The things that were required for the making of the sanctuary were specified. No doubt it was only these things that Moses accepted as a willing offering from the people.

The moment we hear the word "sanctuary" — and we heard it yesterday in hymn 173 (Gadsby's), and it seemed to dwell in our heart today — we seem to conceive in our minds a holy place, a place set apart, a place sanctified, a place even where God would dwell, and, dwelling there, where He would meet with His poor people. The great end and object, at the time, of this willing offering was a dwelling-place for God; and we think that the Lord "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," that the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him, and yet He condescends to dwell in a tent, in a tabernacle! And can we believe, you and I, that He does condescend to dwell in our hearts? O, it is a mercy of mercies! But here God had promised to dwell; and He never promises anything but what He fulfils it. We know that when the tabernacle was set up and the services of the sanctuary

and the worship of God as ordained were provided, the Lord God dwelt in the thick darkness.

This sanctuary was a most holy place. There was the first tabernacle, and then there was the second. Into that most holy place went the high priest once every year, not without blood, which he offered first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. There always seems such an attraction to my soul here. I know it is all done away; there is a better sanctuary for us now than this that was made of shittim wood, and of blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen, and goats' hair. We have a precious Christ for our sanctuary. But there does seem something so solemn, yet so beautiful and wonderful, that the great God of heaven and earth, He who fills immensity, whose Name is eternal, should condescend to be worshipped, to accept the offerings, the atonements, that should be made in this very tabernacle, and in this sanctuary. Of course, it was the presence of God that made it holy; it was the promise of God to meet with His people there and to commune with them, which drew them so often and so graciously to it.

And dare we say that we have no heart to the sanctuary? And, wonderful as that temple was that Solomon built for God, is there not something here in this house of prayer from time to time that is far more beautiful to us, far more desired by us, that even now the Lord God of heaven and earth would meet with us, commune with us from above the mercy seat, after the Spirit, and between the two cherubims? Dare we say that we are any worse off? We are better off than these people of old who thus worshipped God in types and shadows and similitudes. Those things were but the shadows; we have, we hope and trust, the blessed reality, that Jesus, the Son of God, condescends to meet with us here, to give His own witness to the Word of His grace, to accept our united supplications, and to send us to our homes sometimes in a happy realisation that it is no vain thing to seek after or to worship God. We do want to remember that even now, and to us, the promise still remains, "There will I meet with thee."

And not only in this house of prayer, but in our own homes, in our daily lives, when we are about our matters and doing business with God, we do need to remember that

"Where'er they seek Him He is found,  
And every spot is hallowed ground."

Well, this makes His worship. Some would say, and say wrongly, "It is only a prayer meeting"; but this makes it so precious to us—the hope and confidence that the Lord Himself will be here, that here, in our hearts, in our midst, He sits upon the mercy seat, and that He gives out of Himself in answer to the prayers and desires and longings of His poor people.

May God endear His house to us, and make the means of

grace that He has set up more and more precious and profitable to us! Let us remember that

“God in His earthly temples lays  
Foundations for His heavenly praise.”

The mercy that meets you, the blessing that rests upon you, the inward testimony as to the work of God by His good Spirit in your individual hearts, will be a foundation for the never-ceasing and ever-rising glory and praise of the living God.

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### LETTER BY JOHN TURTON

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My dear friend in the faith and fellowship of the precious gospel of the grace of God, through Christ, to poor sinners, I was touched on receiving your kind letter on this anniversary of my 83rd year. May the Lord bless you and make use of you among His people. Each member of His mystical body of which He is the glorious Head — I say, each one has his appointed office to fill, even to the cup of cold water. Solomon said, “Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

The Scripture on the greetings card you kindly sent, I feel is very appropriate. Riches, in whatever form they are bestowed, if not sanctified or blessed of God, become a curse. “Godliness, with contentment, is great gain.” I feel (in a way) to be a lonely character.

“The few that I can call my own,  
Are like myself, in fetters bound.”

And I am presuming to include you among that number. But look what He said (Isa. lxi. 1) and He repeated in the synagogue at Nazareth, and He is still doing it, blessed be His holy Name! Does not a touch of holy love and gracious reverence fill our hearts when He condescends to break our fetters, and break our hearts, with holy shame and tender fear! Are not these true riches? Of course they are; and the blessed community which esteem them so are joined together in one body of which Christ is the ever adorable Head.

In regard to my visit to C., I enjoyed it very much, and the fellowship with you and the people. But my poor ministry! I felt to come very short. It is a blessing to be made of some use under God to His hungry flock. But I say no more.

Again thanking you for your kind wishes.

With Christian love,  
Sincerely I am yours.

Warrington, 14th December, 1959.

J. Turton.

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### VIII. The Supply System

*Mr. Philpot here answers the question: Is it right for a church that is able to support a pastor to carry on year after year with various ministers supplying the pulpit?*

As a general rule we are not favourable to the system of supplies, where it is not a matter of almost absolute necessity. There are, it is true, many places where, except for the services of good men thus laying themselves out for the profit of the churches, there could and would be no preaching of the gospel at all. In these and similar cases, thanks are due to the Lord of the harvest for sending forth labourers to reap these corners of His field. There are other cases also where their services are highly useful and acceptable. The congregation, for instance, may be too small or the people too poor to support a settled minister; or it may be quite an infant cause, and not yet need the supervision of a pastor; or with every desire of the church and congregation for a settled ministry, and after much prayer made by them for a man of God to take the oversight of them, the Lord may still delay to send a suitable servant of His to go in and out permanently amongst them; or the church may be much divided in opinion, and the settlement of a pastor might cause a separation, and almost a breaking up of the cause altogether. These seem justifiable reasons for going on for a while with supplies.

Besides, however, these cases, without wishing to disparage any good and gracious men, we may add that there do not seem to be many ministers in our day adapted for a permanent settlement. Some are during the week much occupied with business or mechanical employments, so that they cannot serve the Lord without distraction, or give themselves wholly (1 Tim. iv. 15) to the work of the ministry. Others want that variety of spiritual matter, those gifts of utterance, that flowing spring of heavenly wisdom, which are, to a certain extent, necessary in a permanent minister. What is needed in him is not a variety *of* truth, but a variety *in* truth. No new truths are wanted, but a holding up, a bringing forward, and, as it were, an impregnating old truth with new life, and that from a flowing brook in the preacher's soul. If there be not a measure of this, there will be a sameness, a deadness, and a dryness in the ministry, which will bring an insensible death over the place, and be the grief and burden of the exercised family of God.

“The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed.”

This wearisome sameness is not so much felt in a supply, and has not the same consequences; for the next Lord's day may bring a different man into the pulpit, who may have more life and feeling in his soul, and indeed, the novelty itself will, in good measure, prevent the weariness.

But assuming that there is a fit man to take the oversight over them (and a church should not be too particular or expect too much, if well satisfied with his experience, gifts, and walk), we are well convinced from Scripture and observation that a settled ministry is far preferable to the system of supplies. Admitting the advantage the latter affords of a greater variety of gifts and experience, yet we feel fully convinced that the evils — evils inherent in the system itself—much preponderate. Where there is no regular pastor, there must always be a degree of unsettledness in the church and congregation. Parties get formed in the church, each preferring their favourite supply; too much power and authority are thrown into the hands of the deacons; there is no one to visit the sick, and be always on the spot when counsel is needed, or a distressed soul to be encouraged; there is no one who has sufficient spiritual authority to reconcile contentions and disputes; and, like a family without a father, there is no one who can mediate with love and affection between the disputing children. What influence has a supply except in the pulpit? Out of that, he is a mere cypher. If contention arise in the church, and the matter be brought before him, what does he say? “I am only a supply. I cannot enter into your disputes. Settle it among yourselves. I am off by the train tomorrow morning at six o’clock.” Or should he endeavour to settle matters, what says one or perhaps both of the contending parties? “What has *he* to do with it? He is only a *supply*. He has no voice in church matters — nor right to be at our meetings. Besides, what can he know of the case? Here today and gone tomorrow. What can he know of the real cause of our dispute, and which party is to blame?” Thus the church falls into a state of unsettledness; there is no discipline or order; church meetings are either tacitly dropped, or become scenes of brawling and contention; those who fear God in the congregation, seeing the state the church has got into, will not join it; and thus peace and prosperity desert it altogether.

The evil, the inherent evil of a system of supplies, is never more distinctly shown than when the pastor of a church dies, and what we may call an *interregnum* takes place before the church agrees in its choice of a new pastor. What strife and division; what a conflict of opinions; what party spirit; what separation often of chief friends does this *interregnum* call forth! Contrast with this the state of a church under a pastor generally esteemed and beloved. The troublers have dropped off; the fighting men and women have gone to fight elsewhere; and those only remain who can sit under the stated minister with comfort and satisfaction. Thus a steady congregation is in due time formed; and if the Lord is with him to bless him, the church gradually lengthens her cords and strengthens her stakes, most of those thus added being his own spiritual children, who are thus imbued with peculiar love

and affection toward him. By continually hearing him, the church and those that fear God in the congregation drink into his drift and spirit; and thus a close bond of union is formed and maintained between the pastor and them.

Contrast with this the state of a church and congregation where the ministry is wholly carried on by supplies. Just as most of the spiritual hearers are beginning to understand and drink into his ministry, he is gone. Through illness, or family afflictions, others, perhaps, are kept at home just during the visit of the very minister under whom they feed most. With much difficulty they manage to get to hear his last sermon, and what they then feel makes them grieve over what they have lost, and long to hear him again. But next Lord's day there is a new man in the pulpit, who perhaps takes the very same text, and knocks down all that the minister whom they had heard so comfortably and profitably had set up. And as a church is often much put about in getting acceptable supplies, and yet the pulpit must be filled, there will be at times a great risk of having men whose trumpet does not give a certain sound, or who may have a legal bias, or who may advance things contrary to the Word of truth and the experience of the saints; or who, from very confusion of mind, in facing a fresh congregation, may drop expressions which they have no subsequent opportunity to explain, but which are painfully remembered after they are gone.

We mean nothing personal by these remarks, nor are they aimed against any man or any church. We have written merely on general grounds, and tried to view the subject in a broad light, and to weigh in the scales of the sanctuary two systems as systems, irrespective of individuals. There may be most excellent supplies, and very indifferent pastors; but the system is distinct from individuals, whether they be the one or the other. It is, in fact, the church which suffers, as it is the church which decides. If it be the mind and will of the church to prefer supplies to a settled minister, no fault can attach to the supply.

Like most other evils, too, it has a tendency to perpetuate itself; and as a bad habit once formed gets daily stronger, till at last it can scarcely be shaken off at all, so with a bad system. Like a man of unsettled habits, a church, once become unsettled, rarely settles down quietly under a pastor; at least there must be a certain time before the unsettledness works off. Habit is a wonderful thing, and as quiet men may, by constant travelling, learn to prefer at last a vagrant life, so quiet churches may come to love the loose, undisciplined freedom of having no head, and the charm of constant variety in seeing new faces in the pulpit and hearing new voices. The deacons, too, may not like to relinquish the power they possess, and the close corporation they form, unchecked by a pastor, and may also fear lest the church and congregation, which

are mainly kept together by the system of supplies, should be broken up or weakened by having recourse to a permanent settlement. Churches, therefore, that really desire a suitable pastor may have almost put it out of their own power to obtain one by the very strength of the system of which they have been at the same time the favourers and the victims.

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### MONDAY MEDITATIONS

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Well! I don't know, it seems to me I am not what I seem;  
 My preaching yesterday today seems like a passing dream;  
 The morning's text was sweet, I know, and people seemed to hear,  
 But there was little unction in the opening, I fear.

What if my preaching should be proved mechanical, and I  
 A creature of ambition, not the "legate of the sky"?  
 What if these midnight musings and this unappeased desire  
 For truth and mighty language prove to be but pulpit fire?

God's truth is all too precious for my few poor struggling words;  
 Nature will move her iron hands and touch discordant chords;  
 I am so great a sinner, Lord, and tremble as I see  
 The vast responsibility that preaching lays on me.

What has it brought me? shattered nerves, seared hopes and weary wife,  
 Creating an unfitness for the common things of life;  
 Were it not well that I should seek, in commerce or in trade,  
 A livelihood for those I love, and for myself a shade,

So broods the weary pastor; so Monday's hours roll by,  
 But th' old men's prayers at eventide eclipse the misery;  
 And he goes home oblivious quite of commerce or of trade,  
 Wondering what sermon next shall spring from out the midnight shade.

Be comforted, O man of God; and is it nothing worth  
 Safely to pilot God's redeemed among the wrecks of earth?  
 In spite of Monday's moanings, friend, a blessed lot is yours,  
 And recompense of grace shall crown the labourer that endures.

Our hearts are worn with earthly care, and steeped in worldly things,  
 And it is almost heaven at times to fold our weary wings,  
 While Gilead's balm and Hermon's dew from your cool heights are driven  
 Across our sultry atmosphere, till every cloud is riven.

Oh! never heed the weariness; be weak, the weak to gain,  
 The glorious work of God the Son is surely worth the pain;  
 While every mercy you unfold and every hope you show  
 Falls to yourself; be comforted, and bid the tempter go.

God renovate the shattered nerves, and rest the weary brain,  
 And soothe with His approving smile the unsuccessful pain;  
 And make Himself so precious by a whisper or a smile,  
 That you shall wish a thousand lives to preach Him all the while.

Mrs. M. A. Chaplin

## OBITUARY

**Jane Dickinson**, mother of Mr. D. F. Dickinson, died on December 2nd, 1970, aged 88, gathered home as a shock of corn fully ripe. She was the daughter of Henry Farrimond, of Pemberton, some of whose sermons appear in old copies of the *Gospel Standard*.

The following extract is from the sermon preached by Mr. C. A. Wood at Tamworth Road, Croydon, the Lord's day morning after her death:

"It is needful now for me just to make a few references to our dear departed sister. She was brought early in life under solemn conviction of sin, but the light of glorious truth entered into her heart in her teens, and with it, soon after, the pardon of sin, the sweet assurance of the love of Christ. She regretted she did not then follow the Lord in the steps of Believer's Baptism. However, she was enabled many years after, about the age of 50, to follow the Lord in the ordinances of His house. Strangely, within two months of membership she was taken away in providence from the North and never, as I gather, really worshipped there after her baptism. But she found in the churches of the South that she was 'no more a stranger nor a guest, but like a child at home.'

"She worshipped largely at Jireh, Tenterden, and then with our friends nearby at West Street, and later here at Tamworth Road. She knew the path of trial, a widow for many years—but the Lord supplied her need—the hand of death took a beloved and only daughter, and then her removal to these parts.

"She did not wish me to say much concerning herself, and I do not do so. I speak to the glory of God, I am speaking of the grace of God in her, a sinner saved by grace. She loved truth; she loved the Word of God, the services of God's house; the printed sermons that she read were blessed much to her soul. She was a praying soul and her constant concern was to be made ready, and to be found right at last. She would often say, 'It is sweating work getting to heaven.' She was strong-minded, of a strong character, and at times there were things, as she would have been the first to acknowledge, that were not pleasing to God, not always of grace. Sometimes she had need of patience. But she had something else; she had this 'inward man' and she proved the reality in a dying hour, that when the poor body was weakening, was wasting away, she sought that the Lord Jesus, her Jesus, would take her home. She was made ready, resting in His will, waiting for her dear Saviour to come.

"On one of my visits, last March, we had a sweet time together when she spoke much of the hymn, 'Hear, gracious God, a sinner's cry.' She had need of it just as every child of God will need that prayer right to the gates of heaven.

'To glory bring me, Lord at last,  
And there when all my fears are past,  
With all Thy saints I'll then agree,  
God has been merciful to me.'

She also referred to the words in Daniel, 'Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.'

"She prayed to have the clear evidence of the mark of that celestial seal. She was a praying woman: she prayed for her dear son, her dear daughter-in-law; she loved them in truth. I may say of her daughter-in-law who was recently baptised, that in the step she took, it drew those two together rather like Naomi and Ruth.

"What was her last word that I could discern? I went over to see her on Tuesday evening after returning from Sussex — I felt constrained to do so though the end did not then seem imminent — and there as I stood by her side, she knew me and was conscious of the words spoken by her dear ones, and about the last word she mouthed, as I quoted those words 'Unto you which believe He is . . .' was 'Precious.'

“One more sinner gathered to glory, a precious soul, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.”

**Florence Ethel Ellingham**, an esteemed member of the church at Bethel, Luton, for 36 years, died in the Lord on February 7th, 1971, aged 76.

She received her first spiritual impressions in the Sabbath school when about twelve to fourteen years old. Mr. Fookes spoke to the children about the negro servant in *The Dairyman's Daughter*, and especially the words:

“Nothing brought Him from above,  
Nothing but redeeming love.”

This left a deep impression, and she was brought into real concern, feeling that the negro servant possessed something which she did not possess. She became greatly troubled, and shortly after this was quite broken down when the hymn was given out:

“Is there a little sinner here,  
Who mourns because of sin?”

For many years she continued in this troubled state, so that her health was affected. Occasionally she received a little help, once in particular when Mr. Fookes preached from: “How shall I put thee among the children?” and another time when Mr. H. E. Carr spoke from: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.”

Still she longed to be delivered, and once said, “If I don't soon get raised up, I don't know what I shall do.” At length when the Lord did bring deliverance, it was as complete as unexpected. In the middle of the night the Lord powerfully spoke to her soul: “Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven.” She was now able to witness a good confession, and shortly afterwards was baptized by her pastor, Mr. J. C. Fookes. This was in 1934.

Miss Ellingham remained steadfast to the end. She loved the house of God and a gospel ministry, and was a gracious, well-exercised and profitable hearer. One special time of hearing during her latter days was under the words: “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink,” which revived a blessing of former days. She was possessed of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is an ornament of great price.

Though never in good health, her end came rather suddenly. She had a stroke and did not live long afterward. Never shall we forget the holy solemnity and quiet reverence with which the congregation at Bethel sang hymn 468 (“For me to die is gain”) on Lord's day morning, February 7th, 1971, realising that at that very time this well-loved member was crossing Jordan. Before the time of the evening service, she had entered into eternal rest. “The memory of the just is blessed.”

**Alice May Parris**, member of the church at Heathfield for 33 years, died on September 4th, 1971, aged 77. She was born at Broad Oak, Heathfield, on November 22nd, 1893, and from her childhood attended the Sunday school and services at Ebenezer Chapel.

Little is known concerning her beginnings in soul matters, but in her early teens she had a severe illness, and it is believed that during this illness she was brought to a concern about her immortal soul. On recovering from this time of affliction, she more eagerly attended the services and the prayer meetings. On one occasion, the pastor, Mr. W. West, took for his text: “And he began to be in want” (Luke xv. 14). This so expressed her exercises and was made a real encouragement and blessing to her soul.

In 1932, she entered a London hospital and had a serious operation on her throat. She became very ill, and her relatives were sent for, fearing that her end was near. During this illness the words, “Be still,

and know that I am God," were spoken to her. She was spared, and gradually restored and able to resume her duties as a children's nurse in a doctor's family, where she was greatly respected and esteemed.

In 1938, she came before the church at Ebenezer, and was baptized and received into the church by the pastor, Mr. F. L. Gosden, whose faithful ministry she highly valued and esteemed.

During the later years of her life, she passed through much affliction, but for the most part was able to attend the house of God, and remained a loyal and consistent member till her death. For the last ten years of her life, in answer to prayer, she was settled in a home of her own, for which she daily gave thanks.

It was evident for some months that her earthly tabernacle was being gradually taken down, although her end came somewhat suddenly. She was at the service the Tuesday evening before her death, but on the following Friday she became very ill, and passed away in her sleep the following day, we believe to be with Christ which is far better.

The mortal remains were laid to rest in Ebenezer Chapel graveyard in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. By the removal by death of our dear friend, we have lost a praying member, a true lover of Zion. Our prayer is that the Lord would in mercy bring in others, and strengthen the things that remain.

C.J.M.

**Ruth Field**, member of the church at Arcal Street, Sedgley, entered her eternal rest on March 28th, 1972, aged 77.

My dear wife was born at Smethwick in Warwickshire of godly parents, and was the eldest of five children. When very young she was constrained to pray as she feared some of the school-teacher's conduct towards her.

In her early twenties she became acquainted with an Australian, and planned to marry and go to Australia. A godly headmistress, who attended the same place of worship as my dear partner, said to her, "Let me warn you, although I am risking your friendship, if you marry that man, on that very day you will regret what you have done, but you will never be able to undo it." Shortly afterwards, cycling along the countryside near her home, she felt she could not leave her native country and her godly parents, and so terminated her association.

Later, she became associated with a young man, who afterwards became a prominent businessman. She had hoped that he would be willing to attend the chapel where she attended, but she soon perceived his resentment of the things she was beginning to love. She was brought to see that she could not continue, and at that time said that she felt she could have pulled God from His throne because He had crossed all the fair designs she had planned, and blasted her gourds and laid her low. Then the Lord spoke to her: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee in the way." After this the first line of hymn 6 was repeatedly applied to her: "God's ways are just, His counsels wise." Thus was she again mercifully preserved.

I then became acquainted with her, and at this time she became deeply concerned about her never-dying soul, and on one particular occasion she said to me in great distress, "I am lost," and nothing I said would comfort her, but rather seemed to aggravate her misery.

About this time (roughly forty-six years ago) we attended the Easter Monday Special Services, the minister being my late father (Mr. Joseph Field), his text being Psalm cvii. 4-7: "They wandered in the wilderness," etc. The good Lord in His rich mercy so blessed her this day, that she said at the close of the day, it was all for her. (It is noteworthy that shortly before her death, she asked her elder daughter to read this same Psalm, and at the fifth verse she repeated after her daughter most

vehemently, "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them," thus showing the lasting nature of this blessing to her end.)

I did feel at this time she would come before the church and declare what the Lord had done for her, but no, she put it off, and the Lord alone knows what she suffered because of her disobedience. She proved: "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke xii. 47).

She was most constant in her attendance on the means of grace, and even at times when she was most unwell, would be in her seat. It could truly be said of her that she "loved the habitation of His house, the place where His honour dwelleth."

Some years ago, when in deep distress about herself and under great temptation, fearing that the Lord turned a deaf ear to her cries, she made up her mind to visit a godly member of the church at Sedgley, Miss Lydia Hampton, who is now in eternal glory, and tell her all that she was passing through, but on the way the Lord spoke the first verse of hymn 627 to her:

" Poor sinner dejected with fear,  
Unbosom thy mind to the Lamb;  
No wrath on His brow He does wear,  
Nor will He poor mourners condemn."

She did not know there was such a hymn in the book. My dear wife was not surprised on reaching Miss Hampton's to find that she was not at home. On the very next evening at the service, the first hymn given out was 627.

In February, 1969, she had a stroke on the Sabbath morning, followed by several minor ones, and it looked as if her end was near. I was hesitant regarding doing the right thing, whether to stay with her or go to chapel and take the service, when she turned to me and said, "Your place is at chapel attending to your Master's business, not stopping here with me." At this time the Lord so blessed her, and she spoke of all the way the Lord had led her from her childhood to the present time.

The good Lord saw fit to answer our petitions and she was in some measure restored and able to attend all the services. She lost a great deal of interest in things here below, and often spoke of her solemn concern for the young, and we know she continually bore them up before the Lord, and was greatly concerned about being made ready for her own approaching end.

We were holding a church meeting in November, 1970, and on the day appointed, I sought earnestly throughout the day that she would be constrained to cast in her lot with us. Unknown to each other, her sister-in-law (who had continuously done all she could to help her from the time she had the stroke) was also imploring the Lord for the same thing, and my dear partner was begging of the Lord that if it was the time for her to come forward, one of us would say something to her. When we were ready to go to the church meeting, I kissed her goodbye, but she kept her head bowed. Her sister-in-law, seeing her dejected look said, "Come along, put your clothes on," to which she readily responded. When she reached the chapel door, she hesitated and said, "Oh dear!" In view of her failing health we commenced with her case first, and she was enabled by the Holy Spirit to give a reason of the hope that was in her, with meekness and fear. She was unanimously received into the church, and was baptized shortly afterwards. Thus we proved that the action we took was justified by the exceptional circumstances. Her bowed head and calm demeanour at the side of the pool was most noticeable.

On the first Lord's day in February this year at the ordinance of the Lord's supper, she said how the Lord had blessed her, and said, "I believe I shall reach heaven and one day see His face."

After this, one evening, embracing her sister-in-law and kissing her, she thanked her for all her kindness to her, and said "I have finished with you now," and then turning to me she said, "I have finished with you and I have finished with my children." From this time she took no interest in anything here. She was able to attend most services until the first Sabbath in March, and that morning, although unfit to go, proved her last.

She was taken into hospital on the 23rd March for observation, but she rapidly declined, and on the 28th March, the hospital sent for the family. On reaching her bed we could all see her end was near. Throughout the afternoon, although gasping for breath and having oxygen administered, she was heard continually to repeat: "The precious blood of Jesus." On being asked if it was well, she said, "He's taken that robe of righteousness and wrapped it all around"; also, "He never takes away my all, Himself he gives me still."

There was much she said which was inaudible, and she gradually sank into unconsciousness, and peacefully passed away before midnight, to be for ever with her Lord. It truly could be said:

"One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;  
We scarce can say, 'They're gone!'"

The funeral service was conducted by Mr. L. R. Broome at Arcal Street, Sedgley, and she was laid to rest at Beacon Hill Cemetery, Sedgley. We have lost a beloved wife and mother.

J.E.F.

**Mary Elizabeth Lockey**, beloved wife of Bertram James Lockey, passed peacefully away on March 30th, 1972, in her 67th year, following an illness which lasted just over seven years. During the first part of this period she was at times brought low but was in measure several times restored, but latterly, though not in bodily pain she suffered much, both mentally and physically, yet bore all her sufferings with much patience.

I have indeed lost a good and gracious wife. Her judgment was sound in the things of God and her quiet word of exhortation has often quietened me as I have realized that what she said was true. In times of trial and difficulty she would so often lovingly direct me to the only source of real help and consolation with a most timely and gracious remark. Her quiet words were often a strength to me, and as I look back over her life, they are now as a renewed revelation of the work of grace in her heart. She was not a talker, but was loved by all who truly knew her.

The work of grace was begun in her early days when in her teens. The first thing she would recall of those days was a period in hospital when she had to bow to the Lord's hand laid upon her for something in which she felt she had acted wrongly. In relating this she has said to me, "I knew why I was in that hospital," but she was touched at that time in those early years of her life by the Lord's goodness and mercy to her. In later years she has told me with tears of the felt evils of her heart by which she had been brought to feel none could be worse, and that it has been a wonder to her at times that she was not cut off altogether, yet there was never the least evidence externally either by word or action of what she was made to feel of these hidden evils.

Though always tender in spirit, she loved and contended for a discriminating ministry, a ministry that laid the sinner low, exalted a precious Christ, and lifted Him up as the only hope of a broken-hearted sinner. and though she was at times cast down, fearing she was not after all the subject of a real work of grace, yet at times she could speak of helps both in reading the Word of God and under the ministry, and in this way she pressed on and was held on in the face of many difficulties. I said to her at times latterly (at service time) that she ought to stay in and rest,

but she would say, "I must go as long as I can for it's not a good example to the young if I stay at home," and often under great weakness of body she would be in her place in God's house. Her delight for many years was to care for the Lord's people, particularly His servants. Truly it was not in the main by words that she was known by those who loved her, but by the fruit she bore. "By their fruit ye shall know them," and as truly it can be said that the fruit she bore proceeded from the grace that was in her heart. The mention of creature merit and goodness in spiritual things was abhorrent to her, while the free mercy, goodness and favour of the Lord was the inward delight of her soul, though never accompanied by any external noise or show. She longed (and I know prayed at times) for a full deliverance, but though she appeared not to be thus favoured while here on earth, she now enjoys in heaven to the full what she sought in her pilgrimage here below. She struggled on to the end amidst all her bodily weakness and affliction as far as her strength allowed, with the same loving care for the Lord's people and His servants which had been in evidence all her life, and many of the Lord's servants would testify to the truth of this. Truly she was a jewel of electing love, nothing in her own eyes, yet though often unable to believe it, possessing all things in Jesus Christ her Lord.

Our loss as a family and as a cause at Westoning is great, yet not greater than her gain. She was indeed loved by us all. There was in her end a mixture of sorrow and joy and although natural sorrow is keenly felt, yet the goodness of the Lord in His help and support has been beyond words to express to the full. On her death bed I hoped she would regain consciousness and say just a few words, but instead I was given an overwhelming sense of spiritual love and union to her such as I had never known before, which was more to me than any words she might have spoken, had she been able to do so. Thus ended her life here on earth.

She was laid to rest in the burial ground at Westoning on April 4th by Mr. J. Delves, whom she had long loved and esteemed as one of the Lord's servants, and amidst a large company of the Lord's servants, and friends from both far and near.

" We too, amid the sacred throng,  
Low at His feet would fall,  
Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all."

B.J.L.

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No comfort is lasting but what floweth from the blood of Christ.

*Manton*

Saints are not so much afraid of suffering as they are of sinning; in suffering, the offence is done to us, but in sinning, the offence is done to God.

*Goodwin*

It is a bad sign when there cannot be found the same proportion and care for heavenly things as men have for things of the world.

*Manton*

True religion is revelation, revelation, revelation.

*J. K. Popham*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

SEPTEMBER, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## SPIRITUAL HUSBANDRY

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. W. Tyler at Robertsbridge Harvest Thanksgiving Services on Wednesday afternoon, November 25th, 1970.*

**Text:** "For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer. iv. 3).

You will understand, I think, that a minister feels hesitant to speak from a portion of the Word of God which relates very considerably to the profession of husbandry. Therefore, in the realisation that a number of you are skilled in the subject of husbandry—some have spent all their lives in the field and in the prosecution of this honourable profession—I feel as an amateur. I am to venture on the subject because I hope it penetrated my spirit, and the tremendous necessity for the accomplishment of it is highly evident.

I will go at once to the point. We are here this day, by profession, to thank God for all His mercies, especially for another harvest season. In all parts of the earth there is a time of thanksgiving for the human race, when the fruits are harvested. They are needful for the maintenance of life and the sustenance of strength in the human race. There was a time of thanksgiving among the Israelites; they had their feasts, and the Lord's people have their feasts. Praise God for the amazing miracle, so unobserved and inconspicuous, the miracle of the cycle of the earth in the sowing of seed, growth, maturity and harvesting. It takes place in every part of the economy of God, and it takes place in the churches.

I will give you the concept that came into my mind this morning when I sought God for a subject for today. From August to November in all parts of Zion I have attempted to take Thanksgiving Services, and there has been a garnering. Corn is of vital importance here; in some countries it is rice, and so on. Are we now to relax? No. Almost immediately we have seen the harvest gathered in, what follows? Looking on a large area of land this morning, what condition was it in? *It had been ploughed.* This is no time to relax. As soon as the harvest is over we must, according to wisdom, think of ploughing again. This is our work in the church. I said to myself, What is the will of God for us in Zion? We have been garnering a few. The angels have garnered some; they are in the heavenly barn. It will be a wonderful thing if the angels come and gather you presently to the heavenly

repository. If you are wheat, they will. You will be gathered to Christ's barn. Wonderful if there is a sign of ripening, of maturity, of great grace—a visible sign. You have looked on and admired when you have seen the corn fully ripe. It is a golden crown set on the brow of the year. A rich golden colour fills the landscape. O to have the same in grace in our souls! People say: "See how rich that soul is in grace! How grace shines in them!" I was led to thank God in prayer for those who were here last year. I said their faces shone under the gospel because they loved it more than anything else beside. Now they are in heaven. A minister sees more than you think; people insufficiently recognise this. It is wonderful to see countenances glow with the love of God under the gospel.

I will pursue the train of thought. The angels have done some reaping; they have been harvesting. Precious souls have been gathered to glory, there is no doubt about it. Of course, we deeply feel our loss: we are the poorer. Then *we* have been favoured and entrusted with some garnering. Souls have been blessed. They have by the power of the Spirit raised feelingly feeble, unworthy voices in a request to follow their Saviour, and we have been absolutely melted, broken, as we listened to their testimony. We have been favoured to gather them into the church through the waters of baptism. I bless God for a measure of it in this year. As far as I am concerned, I have been garnering for heaven rather than for the church militant. I have baptized some for heaven; some for the church. This is thanksgiving. It means something when you hear a testimony that affects the people of God so that there is hardly a dry eye in the little church. I mean deeply, in the Spirit. O bless God for such a harvest, though it is but one! 1970 was marked in this way.

Are we now to rest? No! There has been an ingathering; now we must be ploughing again. This was impressed on my mind as I looked on that extensive area this morning. That is why I said we have brethren who are skilled in husbandry. Ministers must get to work again ploughing. Unless we do, what hope is there of another harvest? What do you think would be the issue if the land were left uncultivated? Would there be any harvest next year? The same simple, ordained process must develop until by the goodness of God there is another harvest. So in the church of God. I do not want to bring myself before you. I believe by the grace of God I was favoured to put the plough in on Lord's day. Before I retired to rest, I received a testimony that rejoiced my soul, not immediately for the church, but concerning the power of the Word of God in the soul.

So, my friends, you see the immensity of the subject before us. Take the joy of harvest. We have to think of the day the ploughman goes forth; the blades go into the soul. For a moment we will take a general survey of the subject.

You will know that a tremendous portion of the teaching of our Lord Jesus relates to husbandry—the earth, preparation, sowing, in succession; the weeds; the need for those who are sent with the plough—they are called to use it; the fruit trees, sometimes barren, sometimes fruit brought to perfection. This all relates to the realm of nature. Think of the soil. After all, it is only a crust on the surface. The deeper you go down, the more wonderful it is in many ways: the minerals, the precious metals, gold and silver, till you come to fire. It is an amazing thing if, in an elementary way, you study the surface of the earth, the various strata. The thin crust of the earth has been over all the centuries cultivated. One of the earliest implements man had wisdom given to construct was the plough. Why? Because it was the only way to sow the seed to get food. When God created everything on the face of the earth, it had seed in itself. To go back, there was the earthly paradise, Eden. Before the fall there were no weeds. Just imagine working in a garden which never grew weeds! So all the year round you would never take out a weed! That was the state of Eden before the fall: not a weed, no pests, nothing to attack, nothing to harm, or cause disease or ill health. But a part of the price of the curse for disobeying God was that the earth's surface should be affected. Take the crust of earth over this planet. It is infected, and all creation is infected by the curse; the elements are. From the moment of the fall, weeds, briars, thorns and thistles grew out of the earth. They are native to it because of the fall; they were not before. What have you if you have a garden, or a tract of land? What is native to it because of the curse? Thorns, thistles, weeds.

And what is the antitype? Your heart and mine in unregeneracy. What is native to the heart? Everything of sin: weeds, thistles, rubbish; nothing good in the picture. You have never seen a garden in your life, where the house is inhabited, like one I know. At the bottom of the ground the people have never done a thing. Over the years they never touch it. It is as high almost as a forest with weeds and rubbish. That is how man is; no one to break up the fallow ground. The amazing thing is the potential. It wouldn't be any good for the sower to go out and take precious seed and cast it in amongst all the rubbish; not the slightest. O no! If the Lord has a favour, and this shall be a part of His garden, He will clear the weeds, extirpate them. He will not pull the tops off or cut them level with the ground. He goes deeply and ploughs the fallow ground. O how amazing it is! I am interested in this. Primitive man through the ages constructed simple instruments for cultivation; the plough, the harrow, the roller. The ground is *ploughed*, prepared; then the seed is cast in. Poor sinner, is that your case before God?

Of course, as far as I judge, there are three interpretations of *fallow*. One is ground that is wild, that has not been culti-

vated, and if we look for the antitype, it is a poor sinner in unregeneracy. The ground has never been cultivated. The Lord begins the powerful operation. He says, "Break up your fallow ground." He begins to break it up. Another application is: after one or two crops, the ground is ploughed and left to rest for a while. I see the concept of this in the church of God. You do not always bring forth. (This is for the people of God and the minister.) God may have put you on a bed of affliction and this has been profitable for you. The other application is: when an erstwhile fruitful field deteriorates because of backsliding and sin. It needs breaking up again. How many of you know what it is to feel it would do you good to have the plough through your heart again? You know it is most needful. "No man, having put his hand to *the plough*, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." That shows it is *the* most important work—the plough to break up the fallow ground.

Let us extend the general survey, the basic thing, the potential. The soil is becoming of immense importance because of the vast population of the world. Vast areas are now cultivated. It is amazing how fruitful the earth is by God's blessing. Every year there has been a harvest. Aren't you amazed? Year after year we have had a harvest. It is a sheer miracle. You know what I am thinking. A congregation is as the earth. I come with a seed basket, or rather, a plough to plough you up a bit. Is it in season? It is if you look on it in nature. I need it. "Break up your fallow ground." So you have got the soil: our hearts, they are the soil. Is there going to be a crop?

Let us go through the economy, *Labourers*. What good would it be to have farms, and agricultural ground with no one to work it? Imagine it. You look over a thousand acre farm, and no one to work it. Everything would go to ruin. Here are ministers, and the Bible tells us they are few. It is hard work; it is the *hardest* work if people knew. The labourers labour; it is a labour. If I may venture a word, the ministry is not mechanised. Machines will not do it; it is done by labour. Does it answer anything in your heart? No matter what the field of industry, things are highly mechanised. The ministry means hard labour, sweat and toil. God only knows what it means. Christ is directing. This is one of His orders, His instructions: "Break up your fallow ground," plough it up.

The plough is an interesting instrument. There are two cutting parts, two blades. One is the coulter, the other is the share—the coulter first, then the share; both are cutting. So when you feel conviction from the coulter, you have the share which will go deeper. The second blade goes deeper. What happens? They are cutting blades which go in the soil and turn it up from the bottom, and expose it to the light and to the elements. How much of this have you had lately, poor sinner?

Have you been ploughed? Has the Lord put the plough in your heart? You say you want a happy season? So do I. Don't you want the plough first? Don't you want God to convince you of sin? That is what you need; for Him to put the plough in. I do not know how you feel under the ministry. Do you say to God, "Let the blades go in my heart so that the deep part is brought to the surface; so that I see it and the elements can act on it?" So we have the soil, the labourers, and the Lord directing them.

Then there is the vital germ, *the seed*. It is no good having ground and labourers if there is no seed. You can have all the land and an army of labourers; if there is no good seed it will be futile. The blessing of God is that in the harvest is bread for the eater, and seed for the sower. Think it over for a moment. The blessing of God in your soul is bread for the eater, and seed for the sower. If God blesses your soul under the Word, you have bread to eat and seed to sow. Sow in the tea interval. If you enter into conversation with your friends, tell them of the blessing of God in your soul. You will eat it and sow the seed. What is seed? The Word of Life, the truth of God in His blessed Book. God never sends a minister without a seed basket and seed, and he sows "beside all waters." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." That is seed.

What else in this dissertation? You could have soil, labourers and seed, but without certain things there would be no success. There must be *light, sunshine, showers, moisture, rain, dew, snow*. No sun, and perhaps moon, no moisture and the seed would be of no avail. What good would it be unless there was a Sun of righteousness? without the unction of the Spirit—rain? See? One of the great properties of the sun, that mighty orb in the firmament, among many, is that it has the power to fructify. So if there is no Sun of righteousness, there is no life or fruitfulness.

Take a general survey of the whole scene, so you view the wonders of God in the economy of nature, and more in the economy of grace. To His Name be ceaseless praise. Amen.

*The evening sermon will follow next month, if the Lord will.*

A man can never come to the throne of grace to ask for grace and mercy but he has mercies to bless God for. *Gill*

He can never truly relish the sweetness of God's mercy who never tasted the bitterness of his own misery. *Goodwin*

They are not worthy of Jesus who will not take a blow for their Master's sake. *Rutherford*

## THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS

*From a discourse by John Owen*

The objection is that *if the righteousness and obedience of Christ to the law be imputed unto us, then what need we yield obedience ourselves?* To this I shall return answer as briefly as I can in the ensuing observations.

1. The placing of our gospel obedience on the right foot of account, that it may neither be exalted into a state, condition, use, nor end not given it of God, nor any reason, cause, motive, end, necessity of it, on the other hand, taken away, weakened, or impaired, is a matter of great importance. Some make our obedience, the works of faith, our works, the matter or cause of our justification; some the condition of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; some the qualification of the person justified, on the one hand. Some exclude all the necessity of them, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, on the other. To debate these differences is not my present business; only I say, on this and other accounts, the right stating of our obedience is of great importance as to our walking with God.

2. We do by no means assign the same place, condition, state, and use to the obedience of Christ imputed to us, and our obedience performed to God. It we did, they were really inconsistent. And therefore, those who affirm that our obedience is the condition or cause of our justification do all of them deny the imputation of the obedience of Christ unto us. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us as that on the account whereof we are accepted, and esteemed righteous before God, and are really so, though not inherently. We are as truly righteous with the obedience of Christ imputed to us as Adam was, or could have been, by a complete righteousness of his own performance. So Rom. v. 18. By His obedience we are made righteous; made so truly, and so accepted, as by the disobedience of Adam we are truly made trespassers and so accounted. And this is that which the apostle desires to be found in, in opposition to his own righteousness (Phil. iii. 9). But our own obedience is not the righteousness whereupon we are accepted and justified before God, although it be acceptable to God, that we should abound therein. And this distinction the apostle doth evidently deliver and confirm, so as nothing can be more clearly revealed; "For by grace we are saved through faith, and this not of ourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them." We are saved, or justified (for that it is whereof the apostle treats) by grace through faith, which receives Jesus Christ and His obedience; "not of works lest any man should boast." But what works are they that the apostle intends? The works of believers,

as in the very beginning of the next words is manifest ; “ for we are ; ” we believers, with our obedience and our works, of whom I speak ; yea, but what need then of works ? Need still there is, “ We are the workmanship,” etc.

Two things the apostle intimates in these words.

1. A reason why we cannot be saved by works ; namely, because we do them not in or by our own strength, which is necessary we should do if we will be saved by them, or justified by them ; but this is not so, saith the apostle, for we are the workmanship of God, etc. All our works are wrought in us by full and effectual undeserved grace.

2. An assertion of the necessity of good works notwithstanding that we are not saved by them, and that is, that God has ordained that we shall walk in them ; which is a sufficient ground of our obedience, whatever be the use of it.

If you will say then, What are the true and proper gospel grounds, reasons, uses, and motives of our obedience, whence the necessity thereof may be demonstrated, and our souls be stirred up to abound and be fruitful therein ? I say, they are so many and lie so deep in the mystery of the gospel and dispensation of grace, spread themselves so throughout the whole revelation of the will of God unto us, that to handle them fully and distinctly, and to give them their due weight, is a thing that I cannot engage in, lest I should be turned aside from what I principally intend. I shall only give you some brief heads of what might at large be insisted on.

I. Our universal obedience, and good works, are indispensably necessary from the sovereign appointment and will of God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

In general : “ This is the will of God, even our sanctification,” or holiness (1 Thess. iv. 3). This is that which God wills, which He requires of us, that we be holy, that we be obedient, that we do His will as the angels do in heaven ; the equity, necessity, profit and advantage of this ground of our obedience might at large be insisted on. And were there no more, this might suffice alone. If it be the will of God, it is our duty.

The Father hath ordained or appointed it ; it is the will of the Father (Eph. ii. 10). The Father is spoken of personally ; Christ being mentioned as Mediator.

The Son hath ordained and appointed it as Mediator : “ I have ordained you that you should bring forth fruit, of obedience, and that it should remain.” And,

The Holy Ghost appoints and ordains believers to works of obedience and holiness, and to work holiness in others. So in particular (Acts xiii. 2), He appoints and designs men to the great work of obedience in preaching the gospel ; and in sinning, men sin against Him.

II. Our holiness, our obedience, work of righteousness, is

one eminent and especial end of the peculiar dispensation of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the business of exalting the glory of God in our salvation; of the electing love of the Father; the purchasing love of the Son; and the operative love of the Spirit.

It is a peculiar end of the electing love of the Father: "He hath chosen us that we should be holy and unblameable." So Isa. iv. 3, 4. His aim and design in choosing of us was that we should be holy and unblameable before Him in love. This He is to accomplish and will bring about in them that are His. "He chooses us to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13). This the Father designed as the first and immediate end of electing love; and proposes the consideration of that love, as a motive to holiness (1 John iv. 8-10).

It is so also of the exceeding love of the Son, whereof the testimonies are innumerable. I shall give but one or two. "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." This was His aim, His design in giving Himself for us. "Christ loved His church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." See 2 Cor. v. 15; Rom. vi. 5.

It is the very work of the love of the Holy Ghost; His whole work upon us, in us, for us, consists in preparing of us for obedience, enabling of us thereunto, and bringing forth the fruits of it in us; and this He doth in opposition to a righteousness of our own, either before it, or to be made up by it (Tit. iii. 5). I need not insist on this; the fruits of the Spirit in us are known (Gal. v. 22).

And thus have we a twofold bottom of the necessity of our obedience and personal holiness. God hath appointed it; He requires it. And it is an eminent immediate end of the distinct dispensation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, in the work of our salvation. If God's sovereignty over us is to be owned; if His love towards us be to be regarded; if the whole work of the ever blessed Trinity, for us, in us, be of any moment, our obedience is necessary.

III. It is necessary in respect of the end thereof; and that whether you consider God, ourselves, or the world.

1. The end of our obedience in respect of God is His glory and honour (Mal. i. 6). This is God's honour, all that we give Him. It is true, He will take His honour from the stoutest and proudest rebel in the world; but all we give Him is in our obedience. The glorifying of God by our obedience is all that we are or can be. Particularly,

It is the glory of the Father. "Let your light so shine be-

fore men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." By our walking in the light of faith doth glory arise to the Father. The fruits of His love, of His grace, of His kindness are seen upon us; and God is glorified in our behalf. And,

The Son is glorified thereby. It is the will of God that as all men honour the Father, so should they honour the Son (John v. 23). And how is this done? By believing in Him (John xiv. 1), obeying of Him. Hence, He says, He is glorified in believers; and prays for an increase of grace and union for them, that He may yet be more glorified and all might know that as Mediator He was sent of God.

The Spirit is glorified also by it. He is grieved by our disobedience (Eph. iv. 30), and therefore His glory is in our bringing forth fruit. He dwells in us as in His temple, which is not to be defiled; holiness becometh His habitation for ever.

Now if this that hath been said be not sufficient to evince a necessity of our obedience, we must suppose ourselves to speak with a sort of men, who regard neither the sovereignty, nor love nor glory of God, Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. Let men say what they please, though our obedience should be all lost, and never regarded, which is impossible (for God is not unjust to forget our labour of love), yet here is a sufficient bottom, ground, and reason of yielding more obedience unto God than ever we shall do whilst we live in this world. I speak also only of gospel grounds of obedience, and not of those that are natural and legal, which are indispensable to all mankind.

2. The end in respect of ourselves immediately is three-fold, First, Honour, Secondly, Peace, Thirdly, Usefulness.

i. Honour. It is by holiness that we are made like unto God, and His image is renewed again in us. This was our honour at our creation; this exalted us above all our fellow creatures here below; we were made in the image of God. This we lost by sin, and became like the beasts that perish. To this honour of conformity to God, of bearing His image, are we exalted again by holiness alone. "Be ye holy," says God, "because I am holy," and, "Be ye perfect," that is, in doing good, "as your heavenly Father is perfect," a likeness and conformity to Him; and herein is the image of God renewed. Therein we put on the "new man which after God is created in righteousness, and holiness of truth." This was that which originally was attended with power and dominion; is still all that is beautiful or comely in the world. How it makes men honourable and precious in the sight of God, of angels, of men, how alone it is that which is not despised, which is of price before the Lord. What contempt and scorn He hath of them in whom it is not, in what abomination He hath them and all their ways, might easily be evinced.

ii. Peace. By it we have communion with God, wherein

peace alone is to be enjoyed. The "wicked are like a troubled sea, that cannot rest," and there is "no peace to them, saith my God." There is no peace, rest, or quietness, in a distance, separation, or alienation from God. He is the rest of our souls. In the light of His countenance is life and peace. Now, "If we walk in the light, as He is light, we have fellowship one with another"; "and verily our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." He that walks in the light of new obedience, he hath communion with God, and in His presence is fulness of joy for ever; without it here is nothing but darkness, and wandering and confusion.

iii. Usefulness. A man without holiness is good for nothing. "Ephraim," says the prophet, "is an empty vine, that brings forth fruit unto itself." And what is such a vine good for? Nothing, saith another prophet, a man cannot make a pin of it, so much as to hang a vessel on. A barren tree is good for nothing, but to be cut down for the fire. Notwithstanding the seeming usefulness of men, who serve the providence of God in their generations, I could easily manifest that the world and the church might want them, and that indeed in themselves they are good for nothing; only the holy man is *commune bonum* [the common good].

3. The end of it in respect of others in the world is manifold.

i. It serves to the conviction and stopping the mouths of some of the enemies of God, both here and hereafter. Here: "Keeping a good conscience; that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, they may be ashamed, beholding your good conversation in Christ." By our keeping of a good conscience, men will be made ashamed of their false accusations; that whereas their malice and hatred of the ways of God hath provoked them to speak all manner of evil of the profession of them, by the holiness and righteousness of the saints, they are convinced and made ashamed, as a thief is when he is taken, and be driven to acknowledge that God is amongst them, and that they are wicked themselves. Hereafter. It is said that the saints shall judge the world; it is on this as well as upon other considerations. Their good works, their righteousness, their holiness, shall be brought forth and manifested to all the world, and the righteousness of God's judgments against wicked men be thence evinced. See, says Christ, these are they that I own, whom you so despised and abhorred; and see their works following them, this and that they have done, when you wallowed in your abominations (Matt xxv. 42, 43).

ii. The conversion of others. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that wherein they spake against you as evil doers, beholding your good works, they may glorify God in the day of visitation." Even revilers, persecutors, evil speakers, have been overcome by the constant holy walking of professors, and when their day of visitation hath come, have glorified God

on that account.

iii. The benefit of all; partly in keeping off judgments from the residue of men, as ten good men would have preserved Sodom; partly by their real communication of good to them with whom they have to do in their generation. Holiness makes a man a good man, useful to all, and others eat of the fruits of one Spirit, that he brings forth continually.

IV. It is necessary in respect of the state and condition of justified persons; and that whether you consider their relative state of acceptance or their state of sanctification.

1. They are accepted and received into friendship with a holy God, a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who hates every unclean thing. And is it not necessary that they should be holy, who are admitted into His presence, walk in His sight, yea, lie in His bosom? Should they not with all diligence cleanse themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord?

2. In respect of sanctification. We have in us a new creature (2 Cor. v. 17). This new creature is fed, cherished, nourished, kept alive by the fruits of holiness. To what end hath God given us new hearts and new natures? Is it that we should kill them, stifle the creature that is found in us, in the womb? That we should give him to the old man to be devoured?

V. It is necessary in respect of the proper place of holiness in the new covenant, and that is twofold.

1. Of the means unto the end. God hath appointed that holiness shall be the means, the way, to that eternal life, which as in itself and originally is His gift by Jesus Christ; so, with regard to His constitution of our obedience, as the means of attaining it, is a reward; and God in bestowing of it a rewarder. Though it be neither the cause, matter, nor condition of our justification, yet it is the way appointed of God for us to walk in for the obtaining of salvation. And therefore, he that hath hope of eternal life purifies himself as He is pure; and none shall ever come to that end, who walketh not in that way; for without holiness it is impossible to see God.

2. It is a testimony and pledge of adoption; a sign and evidence of grace, that is, of acceptance with God, and, the whole expression of our thankfulness.

Now, there is not one of all these causes and reasons of the necessity, the indispensable necessity, of our obedience, good works, and personal righteousness, but would require a more large discourse to unfold and explain than I have allotted to the proposal of them all; and innumerable others there are of the same import that I cannot name. He that upon these accounts doth not think universal holiness and obedience to be of indispensable necessity, unless also it be exalted into the room of the obedience and righteousness of Christ, "let him be filthy still."

## THE REIGN OF GRACE

By *Abraham Booth* (1734-1806)

The gospel of reigning grace, being a doctrine truly divine, has ever been the object of the world's contempt. It was of old a stumbling-block to the self-righteous Jew and foolishness to the philosophic Greek. Paul, who was a resolute assertor of the honours of grace, and indefatigable in preaching Christ, found it so by repeated experience; and that, not only among the illiterate and profane, but also among the learned and devout. Yea, he had frequent occasion to observe that the religious devotees of his age were the first in opposing the doctrine he preached, and the most hardened enemies against the truth of God. The polite, the learned, the religious, all agreed to load both his character and doctrine with the foulest reproaches. Nor was this treatment peculiar to Paul, but common to all his contemporaries, who espoused the same glorious cause and laboured in the same beneficent work. The doctrine they preached was charged with licentiousness. Their enemies boldly affirmed that their language was, "Let us do evil, that good may come." Thus were their character and labours impeached: *that*, as hateful to God; *these*, as destructive to man.

But what was the ground of this impious charge? Were they loose in their morals, or scandalous in their lives? No such thing. Had they not as much regard for practical religion and true morality as any of their objectors? More, far more than they all. Did they never exhort to good works, as necessary to answer any valuable end in the Christian life? They often pressed the performance of them as absolutely necessary to answer various important purposes, both in the sight of God and man. What, then, could be the reason of so horrid a charge? The reason was, their doctrine was not in the least adapted to gratify the pride of man. They taught that without the atonement made on the cross, and the grace revealed in it, the state of the best men would have been absolutely desperate, desperate as that of the devils and those who are already damned. And as the apostles were free to declare that the state of the most respectable part of mankind was evil, dreadfully evil, evil as to those things for the sake of which they most highly esteemed themselves, so they boldly proclaimed a perfect Saviour and a finished salvation to the most worthless and vile.

These primitive teachers, and infallible guides, were not in the least acquainted with those terms and conditions, those prerequisites and qualifications, the performing and attaining of which are accounted so necessary by many in our own times, in order to acceptance with God. They knew but of one way in which a sinner might be accepted of God and justified before Him, and that was entirely of grace through the perfect work of Christ alone.

The way of justification which they taught is absolutely pure and unmixed. In their doctrine on this important subject, grace does not only *appear*; it *shines, reigns, triumphs*: it is the *only* thing. There is not the least tincture of those notions which foster pride, or cherish self-esteem, discernible in it. All those fine distinctions invented by the proud philosopher, or self-righteous moralist, which tend in any degree to support the opinion of human worthiness, and darken our views of divine grace, are by them entirely set aside and totally annihilated. The most shining deeds and valuable qualities that can be found among men, though highly useful and truly excellent when set in their proper places and referred to suitable ends, are, as to the grand article of justification, treated as nonentities. In this respect the most zealous professor, with all his laboured performances, stands on a level with the most profane. The apostolic truth, addressing all to whom it comes as guilty, condemned, perishing wretches, leaves no room for preference or boasting in any, that so the whole glory of our salvation may be secured to that grace which is infinitely rich and absolutely free.

At this the devout pharisee and decent moralist are highly offended. Such doctrines being advanced, they think it incumbent upon them to stand up in defence of what they call a holy life, and to support the sinking credit of good works as having a considerable efficacy in procuring our acceptance with God. This many persons frequently do, much more by talking about their necessity than by performing them. Now they think it their duty to rail at the preacher as an avowed enemy to holiness, nor will they spare to give him the honourable title of, "A friend of publicans and sinners." Now innumerable slanders are cast on the doctrine of grace, as being licentious; and on the ministers of it, as opening the flood-gates of iniquity. For they suppose that every thing bad may be justly expected from men who openly disavow all dependence on their own duties, and whose hope of eternal happiness arises, not from the services which they perform, but from the grace which the gospel reveals; not from the worth which they possess, but from the work which Christ has wrought. Thus they despise the gospel under the fair pretence of more than common concern for the interests of holiness.

Nor is this the only offence which the gospel gives. For as it is entirely inconsistent with the natural notions of men concerning acceptance with God, and contrary to every scheme of salvation which human reason suggests, and as it will admit of no co-partner in relieving a distressed conscience, or in bringing deliverance to a guilty soul, but leaves every one who slights it, and seeks for assistance from any other quarter, to perish under an everlasting curse—so the pride of the self-sufficient kindles into resentment against it as a most uncharitable doctrine and quite unsociable. Nor can the faithful dispensers of sacred truth fail to share in the

honour of these reproaches. For while they dare to affirm that this very gospel, so hateful to the sons of pride, exhibits the *only* way of a sinner's access to his offended Sovereign, and that all who oppose it, and all who embrace its counterfeit, are left in the hands of divine justice without a Mediator, they are sure to be accounted persons of contracted minds and very far from a liberal way of thinking. They are deemed the dupes of bigotry, and little better than the enemies of mankind. He, indeed, who pretends to be a friend to revealed truth, but is cool and indifferent to its honour and interest, whose extensive charity is such that he can allow them who widely differ from him in the capital articles of the christian faith to be safe in their own way, may enjoy his peculiar sentiments without much fear of disturbance. But though such conduct may be applauded under a false notion of christian candour and a catholic spirit, though it may be the way to maintain a friendly intercourse among multitudes whose leading sentiments are widely different, yet it will be deemed, by the God of truth, as deserving no better name than a joint opposition to the spirit and design of His gospel. For such a timid and lukewarm profession of truth will be found, in the end, no other than a wicked conspiracy against both God and man. Such, however, as love the truth will boldly declare against all its counterfeits and every deviation from it, and, whatever may be the consequence, they will say with him of old : " Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

Thus the genuine gospel will always appear like an insult to the taste of the public. Wherever it comes, if it be not received, it awakens disgust and provokes abhorrence. Nor can it be otherwise. For its principal design is to mortify the pride of man and display the glory of grace ; to throw all human excellence down to the dust, and to elevate, even to thrones of glory, the needy and wretched ; to shew that every thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of Christ is an abomination in the sight of God ; and that He who is despised of men, and abhorred by the nations, is Jehovah's eternal delight. The ancient gospel is an unceremonious thing. It pays no respect to the academic, because of his profound learning ; nor to the moralist, on account of his upright conduct. It has not the least regard to the courtier, because of his pompous honours ; nor to the devotee, for the sake of his zeal or his righteousness. No, the potent prince and the abject slave, the wise philosopher and the ignorant rustic, the virtuous lady and the infamous prostitute, stand on the same level in its comprehensive view. Its business is only with the worthless and miserable, whoever they be. If these be relieved, its end is gained. If these be made happy, its Author is glorified, whatever may become of the rest. Towards these it constantly wears the most friendly aspect, and rejoices to do them good. But the self-sufficient of every rank are treated by it with the utmost re-

serve and beheld with a steady contempt. The hungry it fillet with good things, but the rich it sendeth empty away.

These considerations may serve to shew us the true state of the case as it stood between Paul and his opponents. The case was much the same between the Protestants and Papists at, and for some time after, the Reformation. Nor will the apostolic doctrine ever fail to be attended with a strenuous opposition and foul reproaches so long as ignorance of its real nature and legal pride prevail in the hearts of men. Many, indeed, are the methods that have been devised to render the unpalatable truth more generally acceptable, and to remove the offence of the cross. But the sad effects have been, the gospel has been corrupted; the consciences of awakened sinners have been left to grope in the dark for that consolation which nothing but the unadulterated truth could give; and, instead of promoting holiness, the reverse has been awfully manifest. It behoves, therefore, every lover of sacred truth to let it stand on its own basis, and not to tamper with it; to leave all its credit and all its success in the world to its own intrinsic worth, to that authority with which it is clothed, and to the management of that sovereign Being who ordained it for His own glory.

But, however the doctrine of reigning grace may be despised by the self-sufficient, it will ever be revered and highly esteemed by the poor in spirit. For by it they are informed of an honourable way of escape from the wrath to come, which they know they have justly deserved. To the sensible sinner, therefore, it must always be a joyful sound.

And though such persons as are ignorant of its nature, tendency, and design, are always ready to imagine that it has an unfriendly aspect upon morality and good works when preached in its glorious freeness, yet we may boldly affirm that it is the grand instrument ordained by a holy God for informing the ignorant, comforting the disconsolate, and rescuing the profligate from that worst of vassalage, the servitude of sin, and subjection to Satan. Such is the benign tendency of the glorious gospel; such is its friendly and sanctifying influence on the hearts of men.

It will, indeed, be readily acknowledged that this doctrine may be held in licentiousness by those that profess it. But then it will be as confidently maintained that whoever holds it in unrighteousness never received the *love* of that sacred truth, or experienced the *power* of it. For to have a bare conviction of the truth in the mind, and to experience its power on the heart, are very different things. The former may produce an outward profession; the latter will elevate the affections, turn the corrupt bias of the will, and influence the whole conduct. With the steadiest persuasion, therefore, of the holy nature and tendency of the doctrine of divine grace, as it is in itself, and as it operates on the minds and manners of all those who know it in truth, I proceed

to give, not a full display (that is infinitely too high for mortals) but some brief hints concerning that grace which reigns; and of the way in which it is manifested, so as to demonstrate its power, glory and majesty in the salvation of sinners.

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## THE GUILTY CLOTHED

*By Henry Law*

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There is one God and one access to His smile. There is one heaven and one door to it. The Saviour, who was to come, and the Saviour, who is come, is one Christ. The faith of Abel and of the Baptist looked to the same object. Noah did not preach one righteousness, Paul another. The patriarchs did not rejoice in one hope, the apostles in another. From first to last, all the pilgrims to the hill of Zion lean on one arm. All the voyagers, who cross the sea of life to the haven of eternal rest, are guided by one compass.

How all-important, then, is the thought for you, for me! Have we escaped the many by-roads of destruction? Are we securely journeying along the one only track which leads to life?

The Lord Jesus is this one way.

The rays of His redeeming love burst forth as soon as there was a sinner to be enlightened. The garden of Eden witnessed the dark sight of innocence destroyed; but it witnessed, too, an earnest of more than innocence restored. The parents of our race were not driven into the wide wilderness of the earth without a cheering prospect, and a strong comfort, and a precious promise, and a distinct figure of full recovery. The heavenward road was marked out before them in a clear map. Jesus was pictured to them in living colours.

Even the clothing made for them, and put upon them, preached the gospel to them. Consider their case. They were conscious of shame, and blushed to meet the light of day. In their distress they sought concealment. They contrived—human invention could do no more—a shadow of a raiment. How flimsy, how tattered was it! But God in mercy came to their relief. He supplied all their need. He made “coats of skins and clothed them.”

It may be that hitherto you have seen nothing in these garments but a warmth for the body and a screen from the blast. But be assured, the meaning is far larger. It is spiritual. It tells us of the robe of righteousness, which God has provided to adorn and beautify the naked soul. May the Lord by His Spirit show this wonder to us.

We gain light on the subject by examining the substance of which the coats were made. It was not leaves joined together, nor twisted bark, nor plaited roots. It was the skin of lifeless animals. Death, then, must have commenced its desolating work within the

garden. But how did it approach its earliest victims? Not in the slow step of gradual decay. This was the morning of existence. Time was in its infancy. The wastings of age were yet far off. These beasts of the field must have fallen by the hand of violence.

But why? Not to supply man with food. Before the flood, herbs alone sufficed for nourishment. Noah was the first who heard the enlarged grant, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things" (Gen. ix. 3). They were slain, then, for some other purpose.

It could have been no unholy purpose, for God regarded their slaughter with no displeasure. This He testified by using their skins. If, then, they died according to the will of God, but not to feed man, there remains only the solid conclusion that they were offered in sacrifice. Thus they exhibited the Lamb "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." And hence we learn that in Eden victims bled. Yes! the first drop which stained the earth, the first expiring groan, proclaimed in the most intelligible terms, "The wages of sin is death," and, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." The doctrine of these rites is the doctrine of the cross.

All doubt is thus removed as to the skins, which supplied man's first apparel. They were taken from the offerings for sin. Hence each sacrifice presents to the eye of faith the double sign of full salvation. Each altar casts a shadow, not only of the blood which saves from hell, but also of the righteousness which merits heaven.

Such is the figure. It is indeed admirable for simplicity. But who can express the length and breadth of the truth which it unfolds?—a truth which is the very key of heaven and the green pasture of the soul. Until we understand this, we are only at the threshold of the gospel. Will you not, then, draw nearer with me to seek the full comfort of full knowledge?

I cannot doubt that your earnest desire is, when this short life is past, to enter into the joyous mansions of the blest. But have you robes of your own fit for such abode? To be in heaven is to be with God. All there are beautiful in holiness. All shine in purity. All are white in spotless perfection. The eye of God rests on each with delight. He can find no blemish in them. He counts them all meet to sit on thrones of glory. But how have they obtained this unsullied raiment? It can be nothing framed by man. Defiled hands can only work defilement. "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." It is plain, then, that if we can dwell where nothing but righteousness reigns, we must bring righteousness with us. It is equally plain that we can as easily make ourselves gods as array ourselves in unstained robes. Who then will deck us, that we may be

found worthy ?

This reasoning leads us to the glad tidings of the glorious gospel. All is provided for us in the Saviour Jesus. The righteousness needed by us, and presented to us, is His obedience. He does for us what we could never have done. In Him we become what we never could have been without Him. He works out an infinite worthiness that He may be to us all that His name imports, "The Lord our Righteousness."

How precious is this well of truth. Let us draw deeper refreshment from it in gratitude and faith. Behold again and again the glorious fact. One, made of a woman, has passed through human life without once straying from the path of God. The earth has seen a Man pure as God is pure, holy as God is holy, perfect as God is perfect, sinless as God is sinless. He went round the circumference of the law without one deviating step. With strong wing He soared to its utmost height, and neither paused nor flagged. The searching eye of God, always upon Him, could not once find the absence of heavenly love in any thought, or word, or deed. He had all trials, but no fault ; all temptations, but no sin. The ground was oftentimes slippery, but He never slipped. He was assailed on all sides, but He never fell. Thus He stood before God, holding in His hands a full unbroken obedience, accomplished, completed to the minutest letter. But it was all for us. He wrought it, that He might give it ; and He gives it to every naked sinner who in faith flees to be thus sheltered by Him.

Reader, perhaps you eagerly exclaim, Are these tidings confirmed to me by the mouth of the Lord ? They are. They are. Listen to His words : "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22). It is "*unto* all," as payment placed to their credit in the book of account. Thus when God reckons with the believer, and asks the fulfilment of the law, behold, there appears on his behalf, deposited by the hand of Christ, an obedience extensive with the very uttermost demand. God neither desires nor can receive more. So, too, it is "*upon* all." Hence, when the believer stands at heaven's gate, he appears in heavenly robes. The righteousness of Christ is upon him. What more can be required ? It is as bright and glorious as God Himself.

I would, indeed, that you should be satisfied on this point. In this affectionate desire, I beseech you to weigh well another Scripture : "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Blessed is the man in whose heart these words take root ! They are precious beyond ten thousand times ten thousand worlds. Do not they state that we, even we, who are all vileness by sin, if only we are one with Christ by faith, are made the righteousness of God ! To be reckoned righteous would

be much. To be made divine righteousness is far more. O my soul, limit not this mercy. Rejoice in the full comfort. The humble believer re-echoes Scripture, when he says, "I am made in Christ the righteousness of God."

It is manifestly the Lord's will that this provision for the soul should be always present to our adoring eye. Therefore it is that the object most familiar to our senses, even the covering of the body, is planned to portray it. Study then this lesson. It is suited to every mind. The palace and the cottage alike teach it. It is as clear to the unlettered as to the learned. I would fain commend it to your faith and your affection; but I find that earthly shadows fall as far short of the heavenly reality as the creature is nothing when compared with the Creator.

We admire Adam's robe of innocence. It was pure and lovely, but it was human. Not so this robe. It is divine. The God-man, Jesus, is its Author. Adam's robe was soon soiled and lost. Satan touched it, and it crumbled into nothingness. *This* is kept in the height of heaven; the destroyer cannot reach it. The skins brought to Adam would soon wax old and perish. This is "everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24). Age rolling after age brings no decay; its newness is unfading. Earthly robes are sometimes of surpassing splendour. But what would be the brightness of Solomon's royal apparel beside this? Dim as the fairest star before the sun in midday strength.

Here I stop, feeling that eternity cannot exhaust the praises of this garment. But I have not written in vain if these few words make its preciousness more precious to the souls of any.

What can you desire more? Here is Christ's worthiness for our unworthiness. His sinlessness for our sinfulness. His purity for our impurity. His beauty for our deformity. His sincerity for our guile. His truth for our falsehoods. His meekness for our pride. His constancy for our backsliding. His love for our hate. In a word, His fulness for our emptiness. His glory for our shame. His one righteousness for our manifold unrighteousness.

Happy the man who replies, "I hide myself in Thee, O blessed Jesus! I receive Thee, as of God made unto me righteousness." He sweetly sings, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." He humbly adds the note of transport, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me, at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

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That which makes heaven so full of joy is that it is above all fear; and that which makes hell so full of horror is that it is below all hope.

*Goodwin*

## PEACE WITH GOD

*From Thomas Manton on Isaiah liii.*

I shall prove it to you by Scripture that one of the great benefits that we enjoy by Christ's sufferings is peace, or the favour of God. Take a few Scriptures. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is peace of conscience, and peace with God, which is nothing else but our atonement and reconciliation with Him. Every one that is justified hath not peace of conscience; but everyone that is justified hath peace with God. There is a quarrel between God and the soul because of sin; your sins have separated between God and you. Sin maketh God not only an utter enemy, but a severe punisher. Now this strife and quarrel is taken up by Christ; through Jesus it is said we have peace. He maketh God our friend; so Col. i. 20: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." By the blood of His cross; that is, by the bloody, cruel death He suffered upon the cross, He took away sin and wrath. The Scriptures speak of what is most visible; so Eph. ii. 14: "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." He is our peace, the abstract for the concrete; such a speech as is usual in relation to the business of Christ's undertaking; even as He is wisdom to us, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, so, "He shall speak peace to the heathen"; so Christ is called "the Prince of peace." Look, as we call men by the better title, as we say the King of England, not mentioning the lesser dominions, as Scotland, Wales, Ireland; and the King of France, not taking in the petty governments in our ordinary way of speaking; so Christ is set forth by the great privilege He hath purchased for mankind, which includes all other things. "And this Man shall be the peace." This Man shall be our peace, the Prince of peace. All these expressions imply that as we are said to have it this way, so we can have it no other way.

I come to the reasons of the point.

I. *Because Christ by His death hath slain all hatred.* It is the apostle's phrase; "And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby"; that is, took away the cause of hatred, and the cause being taken away, the effect ceaseth. Look, as when there is a whisperer that goeth between party and party, and sets them at odds and variance, we say we shall never be friends till such an one be removed out of the way; so it was between God and the soul. There is no hope of agreement till those that do the ill offices between God and us be removed. And therefore Christ Himself would die rather than not slay our enemy. He hath slain hatred by taking away the cause of it, which was:

1. *The just wrath of God.* Now that was abolished by Christ ; He conquered it by suffering it ; insomuch that God saith, "Fury is not in Me." God's justice being satisfied in Christ, He doth not pursue revenge against His people. Is there any fury in God ?

2. *Sin in us that was the cause of hatred.* You may consider it both in its guilt and power, and both sit heavy upon the soul.

i. *The guilt of it.* There can be no peace as long as this lieth charged upon the soul. This works all that distance and hatred between us and God ; and therefore guilt will cause horror. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth"; that is, bitter enough to possess sins, to own the guilt of them. It was as great a threatening as Christ could use when He told the Jews they should die in their sins. Oh, it is a miserable thing that death should seize upon us in our sins. What a perplexity is the soul then left to ! Whither will it go when it dieth in its own guilt ? Now this is taken away by Christ ; and therefore it is so often said that we have remission of sins by His blood : "And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

ii. *The power of sin.* This disturbeth and filleth the soul with the sense of God's wrath, and embittereth the soul against God. Through the strength of sin we hate God, because we cannot but look upon Him as a punisher of it. Now Christ slayeth this hatred by sending His Spirit to kill our enmity, to heal our poisoned natures, and maketh us more willing and careful to please God. It is said, "The Spirit of regeneration is shed on us abundantly (or richly) through Jesus Christ our Saviour." He taketh away that rancorous disposition that is in the heart.

This is the first reason : Christ taketh away hatred, and therefore purchaseth peace.

II. *Because He hath taken away all show of hatred.* The ceremonial law was an ordinance hinting out our guilt. Now Christ would take away whatever in show made against us, or was contrary to us. "He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." He would not leave any ground for doubt or suspicion ; He hath provided against all our scruples. Christ would not leave the least line uncrossed ; our own confessions do not make against us. As soon as you give in the bill, Christ teareth it ; He hath nailed all in triumph to His cross. You can urge many things against yourselves ; aye, but all these things are pardoned and God hath nothing to show for the debt. Paul says, "I was a blasphemer and a persecutor"—a heavy bill—"but I obtained mercy." All this was taken out of the way. Christ hath not only paid the debt, but torn also the bonds. By His death on the cross, He did as it were declare to the believer that God hath nothing to show against him. As there is not anger, so there should not be suspicion of anger. He hath taken up the con-

troversy that was between God and the soul.

III. *Christ hath procured us favour.* Not only the matter that kindleth anger, and all show of it is taken away, but love is procured; the children of wrath are become the children of love. The eyes of God's holiness cannot but be offended with a filthy, polluted sinner, yet He is well pleased with them in Christ, and so they are not only objects of His love but of His delight: "But thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee"; and in another place, "He shall rejoice over them to do them good." A man delighteth in things that are most suitable and agreeable to his nature. There cannot be a more pleasing work to God than to do His people good. It is said of the lost sheep that "when He hath found it, He layeth it on His shoulders, rejoicing." Before, there could be no work more suitable to God's justice than to punish sinners; whereas now it is, as the prophet calleth it, "His strange work" (Isa. xxviii. 21), a thing that He would not be acquainted with towards His people. Whereas, to the wicked, still He laughs at their destruction (Prov. i. 26). Therefore, Christ hath purchased peace for us, because he hath not only taken away anger but procured favour. Among men, anger many times may be taken away, but they have not love. Rebels, after a pardon, live in a great deal of umbrage, and are under suspicion; the scars remain though the wound be cured—as Absalom, when pardoned, did not see the king's face. Artificial cracks will be seen though soldered; but it is not so here. Christ hath satisfied wrath and merited favour; so that the soul can look upon God with a great deal of comfort and joy.

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## HOW I LEARNED THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

*By John Hirst (1736-1815)*

(John Hirst was for forty-two years the pastor at Ebenezer Particular Baptist Chapel, Bacup, Lancs. Our readers will remember that he was the minister under whose preaching John Kershaw was blessed in his early days. John Kershaw wrote of him: "I cannot describe the regard I had for him; I esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake. The memory of this man of God is sweet to me. He preached the gospel fully, freely and faithfully, and was an example to the flock of God in every good word and work.")

Though many now considered me a Calvinist, I was as yet far from having embraced that system. Of this the following fact will be a sufficient testimony. Having to preach\* at \_\_\_\_\_, I was informed that a Baptist minister was coming to hear me. I resolved to exert all my talents to overthrow his sentiments. I said all I could against the doctrine of election, chiefly by way of reproach, loading it with monstrous and horrible inferences and consequences. The minister let me pass without reproof or correction—but God did not.

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\* Mr. Hirst was at this time preaching among the Methodists.

Having to walk about three miles home, I had time to reflect on what I had been doing. I was powerfully convinced that I had been speaking against a doctrine which I had never considered nor examined, and therefore my conduct was highly criminal whether the doctrine was true or false. My spirit sunk within me. I felt deep remorse and, I hope, godly sorrow and true repentance before God. I took the first opportunity of searching my Bible, and made use of the best means in my power to understand it, with prayer to God to enlighten my mind that I might not be deceived. By reading the epistles of Paul to the Romans and Ephesians, I saw my error and stood convicted of having blasphemed the truth and sovereignty of God. I wept and trembled in His presence. I could not forbear crying, "Wretch that I am, thus to speak against my Maker and my Judge! Has not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? and has not the Sovereign of the universe a right to bestow His favours on whom He pleases and have mercy on whom He will have mercy? If I am not by grace chosen in Christ to salvation, I never must be saved. And dare I conclude that I am interested in electing love, when I have been trampling the doctrine under my feet and representing it as the offspring of hell and nurse of licentiousness?"

Notwithstanding I was now thoroughly convinced of the truth of election, I found my heart rise against it, because I knew it would set the Methodists against me, whom I dearly loved. Finding opposition in my mind to so plain a truth, I was again brought to the brink of despair. It now became my daily prayer, whatever might be my lot in this world, that God would enable me to love the truth for the truth's sake. In a few weeks, the beauty, the grace and glory of the doctrine of election appeared to my understanding with such convincing efficacy, that I became fully persuaded, as I remain to this day, that election is the doctrine of the Bible, and that there can be no salvation without it.

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## HOW I LEARNED IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

*By John Hirst*

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In the year 1764 I was engaged among the Methodists as a local preacher, and in general met with great acceptance. I frequently preached at Bacup, Millend, Rossendale, Padiham, Loughclough, near Whitworth, and at Buersil and other places in the neighbourhood of Rochdale. But when I had laboured amongst them about twelve months, I was strongly suspected of being a Calvinist, at which time I did not know there were any such people in the world. Some time after this I showed the Superintendent a letter which I intended to send to an acquaintance of mine.

When he had read it he said, "John, you do not agree with us in sentiment." With astonishment I enquired, "Wherein do we differ?" but he would not answer me. This grieved me extremely for I did not at that time, nor could I for a long time afterwards, believe that God had another people on earth equally excellent as the Methodists. The next day I asked my fellow class leader if the preacher had informed him of what had passed between us. He told me that he was acquainted with it, and that the point of difference was my believing that the righteousness of Christ imputed to a sinner was the sole and exclusive matter of his justification in the sight of God.

This very much affected me. "What!" said I, "do not the Methodists believe this?" He replied, "I do, but some of them do not." I was ready to exclaim, "Lord! what must I do? I am undone without this righteousness. I have none at all of my own. O Lord, if I am not found in Thy righteousness, I cannot be saved." The Bible was my only guide. I applied to it again for information on this very important subject; and here I could find no other way of acceptance but by the Lord as our righteousness. Here, therefore, I was resolved to abide, because to give up this doctrine was to give up my hope, my joy, my heaven, my all. Having yet read none of Mr. Wesley's writings, I procured some of them and read in particular his abridgement of Mr. John Goodwin. Here I found he plainly denied the obedience of Christ being imputed for our justification. I was confounded, but I was not convinced. About this time I happened to hear a sermon from Mr. John Parker on Psalm xxxiv. 17. He described the Lord's people as righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto them, by the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit in them, and by a practical conformity to the will of God. The Lord was pleased to bless this sermon to my soul. I was fully delivered from the confusion of mind, and established in the doctrine of imputation and, thanks be to God, I have to this day stood confirmed in the belief of it, and derived from it, at many times, unspeakable comfort.

Such was my affection to the Methodists that it sometimes prevailed over my judgment, and I was tempted in my preaching, if not to deny, yet to cover, conceal, or omit the doctrine of justification by the obedience and death of Christ. Notwithstanding this criminal weakness, I was charged with Calvinism. There were many of my hearers who professed great satisfaction in my labours, and that in proportion as I honestly avowed my sentiments. This roused the indignation of the travelling preachers, and in some time they brought me before Mr. Wesley. I was charged with propagating erroneous sentiments respecting justification. I admitted that I held the doctrine called erroneous but I could not learn otherwise from the Bible, which was my only rule. Mr. Wesley treated me with tenderness. He only requested

that I would be silent respecting the point of difference between me and his people, and he would allow me my sentiments in private, if I would not divulge them in my preaching. I replied that I had not, as had been hinted, the most distant thought of making a division among his people, but that I could not promise to conceal what I judged to be truth, and very important truth, nor to aim at anything in my preaching but to glorify God, by publishing His whole counsel to dying men. I was dismissed from his presence, not knowing but that I might be presently excluded the society, but the preachers, for some reason or other, thought proper not to proceed so far at that time. It was several months after this before I was excluded, and I continued preaching as before.

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### GRACIOUS COUNSEL TO A YOUNG BELIEVER

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My dear nephew—I was very pleased to receive your letter. I had quite forgotten that I had written to you so many years back. I sometimes think I have almost come to an end of my letter writing. I feel so often shut up and wonder where I am and what I am.

I feel I should like to write you a few lines at this time with the Lord's help. I do not wonder that you did not value the spiritual part of the letter when you received it, as at that time, you now feel, you were in nature's darkness and desired not the knowledge of these blessed things. It is indeed an infinite mercy to have our eyes opened, also our ears and heart. Who could do it but the almighty God by His blessed Spirit's power? Each one so wrought upon is a miracle of grace. You can come in now with the man that was born blind who, in a few words, described his case by saying, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Those around him could not see Jesus as he saw Him, so they cast him out. Blessed be God he was not cast out of His sight, but the dear Lord found him a second time and opened his spiritual eyes by saying, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The poor man said, in his spiritual darkness and ignorance, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." He then received his second blessing, even spiritual sight, and said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped Him.

You must not be surprised if you are assailed by the great adversary (and you *will* be). He hates God's image, work and grace with a perfect hatred, and will do all he can to cast you down and keep you from a close walk with God. I write from experience. I have found it very hard to withstand his fiery darts; there is so much in me for him to work upon, much more inside than outside, but up to the present it has been, "Cast down, but

not destroyed." My Captain stood the fiery test, and I humbly hope to stand through Him, and Him alone. One wrote, "He bore it for a chosen race, And thus became their Hiding-place." You have now entered upon the spiritual warfare; your three mighty foes are flesh, sin and Satan. We might well say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In myself as weak as a worm, how can I stand? You know what is needed; it is the weapon of all-prayer. "Pray if thou canst or canst not speak, But pray with faith in Jesus' name." "The feeblest prayer, if faith be there, Exceeds all empty notion." May the dear Lord pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplications for all saints that they may be strengthened in the inner man.

It was a precious text you heard last Sunday: "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" I would feign see Him too, but He hides Himself and withdraws so quickly. I do believe I had a little touch of His love in January last year, breaking me all to pieces with tears of contrition and godly sorrow for sin, not to be repented of. I love to lie at His dear feet and feel the tears flow. I cannot break my own heart, so it must be His own work. I felt I should have a good day on hearing Mr. M. the following Sunday, and I did. His text was: "That He was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner" (Luke xix. 7). I told him after that he ought to have said "a woman that is a sinner."

Now, my dear nephew, I will close for this time.

Your affectionate Aunt Emma.

Palmers Green, 10th March, 1927.

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### IX. Singing

*Here the question is answered: Is singing a part of the worship of almighty God? If so, is it right for a few persons to sit together and start "scientific" tunes that hardly anyone can sing but themselves?*

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When heart and voice can go together, there is no sweeter part of the public worship of God than the singing. "I will sing with the spirit," says the apostle, "and I will sing with the understanding also" (1 Cor. xiv. 15). It not only forms a most suitable commencement of the service, softening and opening the heart, and preparing it for drawing near to God; but after the attention has been strained in listening to the chapter read, and uniting in spirit with the prayer offered, it forms a sweet relief of mind, it being, so to speak, a relaxing of the stretched string, and a consequent enabling of it again to be tightened to attend to the sermon. It is also the only mode in which the congregation, consistently with solemnity and order (for any interjections of "Amen," "Lord, hear," etc., are a thorough nuisance, and for the most

part the mere expression of canting hypocrisy) can give vent to their feelings, and take an expressed part in the worship of God. Singing is as much a part of the public worship of God as prayer or preaching, and ought therefore not to be choral, but congregational. A certain knowledge of music, indeed, is needed to preserve our ears from being distressed by horrid discords, and this part of the service of God from being made a misery instead of a delight; and to a certain extent it is necessary for those who are gifted with musical ears and voices to sit together, that time and tune may be observed, and a body of harmonious voice have sufficient strength and unity of sound to lead and sustain the scattered voices of the congregation. As this accuracy of time and tune, and this full harmony of sound, can only be attained by practising together, what is called a choir is gradually formed; and by degrees the more scientific portion, often, alas! the least gracious, begin to hanker after, and perhaps introduce, tunes which, however beautiful in themselves, are out of place in the public worship of God, and actually destroy that part of divine service, from the inability of the people to follow them. This is an abuse of singing, which should be testified against, and, if possible, put down.

Our own view is this, that, as a general rule, the good old stock tunes are the best. They have stood the test of time, possess in themselves those only real sources of musical excellence and delight, melody and expression, are generally well known to the congregation, are pitched in keys within the compass of ordinary voices, and therefore are capable of that full body of sound which constitutes the sweetness and force of congregational, as distinguished from choral singing. We do not want in our simple, humble chapels the graces of a concert-room, the science and harmony of an orchestra, or the loud swell of the organ of a cathedral. We want simplicity in the service of God. Simple and childlike should be the prayer; simple and plain the sermon, and simple, though not unmusical, the singing. As the best things get stale by repetition, the old tunes may be occasionally recruited by a new one, which will in due time fall into the ranks of the stock tunes, and thus gradually, and almost insensibly, the list will be increased in number and variety.

The most difficult, because the spiritual part of the question, we have not touched upon—that the most musical voices have too often not the most gracious hearts. But this point we cannot handle now. To do so would be foreign to our correspondent's question, and open a wide field, which we do not feel now called upon to tread.

(We take this opportunity to make a few observations about *reverence in singing*. Some of the words we sing so often are most sacred, and some unspeakably solemn. We much admire the quiet, reverent and subdued manner in which a few of our congregations sing of the sufferings of Christ or the miseries of the lost. How revolting it is, even to

common decency, to hear a congregation irreverently bawl such sacred expressions as "the bleeding wounds of our incarnate God"! Not all in a mixed congregation possess grace; but all can attempt to sing the words thoughtfully and with meaning.)

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### BOOK NOTICES

**The Covenantal Sabbath**, by Francis Nigel Lee ; 343 pages ; cloth bound ; price £2 ; obtainable from the Lord's Day Observance Society, 55 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1 LQ.

This beautifully produced book must be the most detailed, thorough study of the Sabbath that has appeared for many years.

The author, Dr. Nigel Lee, is a South African scholar, theologian and barrister—a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and an advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa. Born a Roman Catholic, he turned atheist, but was led to a knowledge of the truth through reading an Afrikaans Bible. He writes from the standpoint of one who wholeheartedly believes the doctrines of grace and who reverences the Word of God. He speaks of his "childlike faith in the plenary verbal inspiration of the sacred Scriptures as the Word of God."

A right understanding of the Sabbath is of the greatest importance, especially today when Sabbath desecration abounds. The aim of *The Covenantal Sabbath* is "to present the subject in such scholarly and understandable fashion as to further an intelligent attitude towards the Lord's day in harmony with the revealed will of the day's Lord," and "that Christians should acquire a clear, scriptural understanding of the divinely ordained principles and purpose of the sabbatic institution, which points to the whole counsel of God throughout Holy writ."

The book seeks to answer two questions especially : Is the Sabbath of perpetual obligation ? Was the historic change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday scriptural or not ? The seven chapters deal with : The Everlasting Covenantal Sabbath ; The Adamic Covenantal Sabbath ; The Noahic Covenantal Sabbath ; The Abrahamic Covenantal Sabbath ; The Mosaic Covenantal Sabbath ; The New Covenantal Sabbath ; Conclusions about the Covenantal Sabbath. There are also ten appendices.

*The Covenantal Sabbath* forms the bulk of a thesis offered by the author to the University of Stellenbosch for a doctorate in theology. *This explains its strength and weakness*. The whole subject is gone into in minutest detail, every point being thoroughly examined and every problem grappled with. It is a full, comprehensive survey.

But this is a book for the student, the intellectual, the academic. Because of this, we feel it will have a limited value. Will it be read by the general Evangelical whose views of the Sabbath may be indistinct ? Will young people, who need clear teaching, grapple with it ? Will it be of special help to those who already are confirmed in heart and mind that the Sabbath is a divine institution, and must be honoured ? On the other hand, are the enemies of truth likely to read a book presented in this way, and be influenced by it ? We are doubtful.

We are disappointed to find so little that is spiritual in such a book. Surely, if only a concluding chapter, a little could have been written on the blessedness of the Sabbath and its preciousness to the believer, something of the spirit of, "Welcome, sweet day of rest, That saw the Lord arise."

**A Defence of Particular Redemption**, by William Rushton ; 48 pages ; semi-stiff cover ; published in U.S.A. by W. J. Berry, Editor of the *Old Faith Contender* ; obtainable in this country 20p post free, from Mr. O. G. Pearce, 15a Park Avenue South, Harpenden, Herts.

It was in 1785 that Andrew Fuller first published his celebrated book, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. In it he set forth his belief that

gospel invitations are absolutely universal, and that it is the duty of all men savingly to believe. His views spread rapidly through the Particular Baptist denomination of his day, and were widely accepted.

*A Defence of Particular Redemption* was written in 1831—the time when Fuller's teachings were gaining supremacy. William Rushton, who died in 1838, aged 41, was a member of a Baptist church in Liverpool. (John Kershaw mentions him once in his autobiography.) This little book clearly sets out the doctrine of particular redemption, and shows that Fuller, though professing to be a Calvinist, *did not believe in particular redemption*. Fuller's belief was that there is "an objective fullness in Christ's atonement, sufficient for the whole world were the whole world to believe in Him." The particularity of redemption, he contended, was only in its design and application; and thus he was led to embrace an *indefinite* atonement—neither particular nor universal. This also led to his affirming that Christ died for sin (not for any sinners in particular), and to his denying that Christ's death was vicarious, that the atonement was the payment of a debt, and that sin was imputed to Christ.

As is well known, most of the Particular Baptist churches that embraced "Fullerism" had within a hundred years become General. The General Baptist, A. C. Underwood, in his *History of the English Baptists*, writes: "During the nineteenth century it became increasingly clear that Fullerism could be only a half-way house in the advance of the Particular Baptists from the prison house of hyper-Calvinism and that the logical corollary of the offer of the gospel to all men was a universal atonement" (page 202). Though we cannot agree with this being an "advance," we must accept his statement that follows that this was the chief cause of the old Particular Baptists being able to merge with the General Baptists in 1891.

*A Defence of Particular Redemption* is not merely of historical interest. It is a timely warning. Fuller's name is much to the fore today among professed Calvinists, and he is honoured as a champion of the Reformed faith. While we realise that many godly people have retained clear views of particular redemption along with a belief in the "free offer," this little book shows how easily mistaken views of the atonement can creep in, and particular redemption be denied.

Rushton's book was first reviewed in the *Gospel Standard* in 1842. This present edition contains a number of mistakes in grammar, spelling, etc., for which the publisher apologizes in an appended errata note.

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### THE FOOLISH VIRGINS

When, descending from the sky,  
 The Bridegroom shall appear,  
 And the solemn midnight cry  
 Shall call professors near,  
 How the sound our hearts will damp!  
 How will shame o'erspread each face!  
 If we only have a lamp  
 Without the oil of grace.

Foolish virgins then will wake,  
 And seek for a supply;  
 But in vain the pains they take  
 To borrow or to buy.  
 Then with those they now despise,  
 Earnestly they wish to share;  
 But the best among the wise  
 Will have no oil to spare.

Wise they are, and truly blest,  
 Who then shall ready be !  
 But despair will seize the rest,  
 And dreadful misery ;  
 " Once," they'll cry, " we scorned to doubt,  
 Though in lies our trust we put ;  
 Now our lamp of hope is out,  
 The door of mercy shut."

If they then presume to plead,  
 " Lord, open to us now ;  
 We on earth have heard and prayed,  
 And with Thy saints did bow " ;  
 He will answer from His throne,  
 " Though you with My people mixed,  
 Yet to Me ye ne'er were known ;  
 Depart, your doom is fixed."

O that none who worship here  
 May hear that word, " Depart ! "  
 Lord, impress a godly fear  
 Upon each careless heart ;  
 Help us, Lord, to search the camp,  
 Let us not ourselves beguile,  
 Trusting to a dying lamp,  
 Without a stock of oil.

John Newton (1725-1807)

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### OBITUARY

**Mary Harrison**, member of the church at Rochdale Road, Manchester, for 17 years, died on December 15th, 1971, aged 79.

She attended the chapel all her life, being brought up in a godly home. Father was very strict, and as Mary grew up, she declared that when she was twenty-one, she would please herself when she went to chapel. However, she loved her father dearly, and to please him she, at least, attended the chapel services. During the first World War, she went to live with a widowed sister, and so had the opportunity, as she then felt, of pleasing herself. Then in 1921 she married. Once, for a few weeks, she left chapel and went to the Albert Hall, saying it was much brighter and more cheerful. However, feeling that her father would not sing some of the hymns that were sung, she had to leave. At one period she and her husband went to live in Wales, but again she could not settle as there was no Strict Baptist chapel, so they returned to Manchester.

In January, 1931, father died in hospital after only 36 hours' illness (see Obituary of Robert Kinderman—*G.S.* 1931, page 311). Evidently she had been resting on her father's prayers, and now was most upset, saying, " Now we have no father to pray for us."

She would never say much about her spiritual leadings ; but one year when staying in London for the weekend, the sermon at Gower Street Memorial Chapel completely broke her down. The text was : " God be merciful to me a sinner." She said she was that *sinner*—a never to be forgotten day ! So she went on, the Lord dealing with her, and she trying to hide it ; but she told me on one occasion that when she was alone, she had spent hours on her knees, reading her Bible, and what she saw in it she could not express to anyone.

Eventually she became much exercised about believer's baptism, though she felt most unworthy. One week end in 1954, she attended Haydock Chapel on the Lord's day, and heard a sermon preached from 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. This deepened the exercise, and she was constrained to make application to the church at Rochdale Road, Manchester, though

she felt most unworthy, and the words continued with her many days :

“ Why me, why me, O blessed God,  
Why such a wretch as me ?  
Who must for ever lie in hell,  
Were not salvation free.”

She was well received by the church. The day of her baptism, the first Lord's day in June, 1954, was a most blessed day to her soul, and it could truly be said that she hardly knew where she was. The Lord so shone upon and blessed her soul, and for a little while it continued, but alas ! days of darkness and distress and affliction were to follow ; but the Lord upheld her and chastised her when, as she said, natural inclinations drew her away from spiritual things. One of her chief pleasures was in helping to clean the chapel, and she felt how blessed it was even to be allowed to be of service.

In later years her health was very bad, but she invariably said, “ I've much to be thankful for.” Not long before the Lord took her to Himself, when asked how matters were with her soul, the answer she gave was, “ *O, I am a sinner ; I pray and pray and pray.*”

She was at chapel the Lord's day before her death, though far from well. On Wednesday, December 15th, 1971, in the evening while resting, the Lord took her to be with Himself, without a sound or sigh. Truly her end was peace. The interment was at Blackley Cemetery on December 20th.

Her sisters.

**Ethel Gaunt**, widow of Charles W. Gaunt, late deacon at the Strict Baptist Meeting House, St. Ives (Hunts.), entered her eternal rest on May 28th, 1972, aged 95.

Born of godly parents in Over, Cambridgeshire, she attended with her parents the Strict Baptist Chapel at Over under the ministry of Mr. Coughtrey until on entering domestic service, she removed to London. Of her call by grace the writer has no knowledge, saving that she was baptised at Streatham (London) in her early twenties by Mr. Charles Russell, later of Leatherhead.

United by marriage in 1910 to our late deacon, C. W. Gaunt (who was baptized in the river at Overcote), they resided in Needingworth, but finding no savoury meat for their souls in that village, they joined the church at St. Ives in 1914 under the ministry of Mr. J. T. Wiles. For many years they regularly made the three and a half mile journey from their home to St. Ives to attend the means of grace, until circumstances compelled them to sell their home and business in Needingworth in 1955 and take up residence in St. Ives where, in 1968, her husband passed peacefully into rest in his 90th year after fifty-four years' membership with this church, being a faithful deacon for the last nineteen years of his life.

Her remaining years of widowhood were spent in the Bethesda Home at Redhill, where she passed peacefully into rest in the early hours of Lord's Day, 28th May, 1972.

Her mortal remains were brought to St. Ives where, after conducting the service in the chapel, Mr. W. Davidson committed them to the grave, to lie beside those of her husband awaiting what we believe will be for them “ a glorious resurrection.” Of her it can truly be said she loved the habitation of the Lord's house and the place where His honour dwelleth.

To the Matron and Staff of the Bethesda Home at Redhill we, the church and congregation worshipping at St. Ives, tender our sincere appreciation of the loving care bestowed upon one whom we loved for the truth's sake.

W.L.

**Herbert Fullard Fyson**, the much loved deacon at Linslade Chapel, died on June 22nd, 1972, in his 93rd year. During the last nine months he had been devotedly cared for by the Matron and Staff at the Bethesda Home, Harpenden.

Born at Hatfield Peverel, he attended Witham Chapel during his early years. The first impression of his soul's state occurred during a visit to relatives during family worship, Matthew xxiv being the reading; he became greatly distressed, feeling himself a lost sinner. For a considerable period he laboured under a deep sense of his need of the mercy of God, his feelings rising and falling between expectancy and despondency, till in his late twenties he was brought into gospel liberty through a sermon preached by Mr. Edward Carr at Wootton Bassett.

He was a craftsman of distinction in the joinery trade, the pursuit of which eventually brought him to Leighton Buzzard, joining the church at Linslade, where he stood a member for over forty years. He was of a meek and quiet spirit, ever abstaining from self-assertion, yet as forward as any in defence of the truth. He often feared his end, but when he felt its approach, there was a conspicuous calmness possessing him. One heard him say with great emphasis when Psalm xxiii was being read to him, "Yes, He is my Shepherd." He will be so much missed by the pastor and church at Linslade, who believe that his many prayers for the church and his family will be answered.

He was laid to rest at Vandyke Road Cemetery, Leighton Buzzard, in the presence of a large company.

G.J.C.

**Alice Mary Uff** (formerly Alice Dudley) died on July 13th, 1972. For over forty years she was a member of the church at Linslade.

She was brought up among the Wesleyans, but through the influence of an aunt she came to attend the ministry at Linslade, where the work of the Spirit became apparent in her case. The ministry of Mr. Henry Janes was instrumental in bringing her into deeper things, and he baptized her in 1931. She walked consistently in the spirit of the gospel, showing much love for the Lord and His people. To her pastor and others who visited her just before her end, it was abundantly clear that she was in a blessed state, and when questioned, she struggled to express what she was feeling, but extreme weakness forbade clear communication.

The funeral took place at Waddesdon Hill. The loss sustained by her removal is great, but her gain is far greater.

G.J.C.

**Kate Rose Crowter**, beloved wife of George Crowter, member of the church at Galeed, Brighton (formerly of Coventry), died and entered her eternal rest on 26th June, 1972, aged 75, after a painful affliction, patiently endured as supported by grace. "Her sufferings now have reached a close, And heaven affords her sweet repose." It can truly be said of her: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Prov. xxxi. 28).

Further particulars may follow.

F.L.G.

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The growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak, which increases slowly indeed, but surely; many suns, showers, and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root.

*Newton*

The state of a backslider may be compared to an eclipse; the earth has got between him and the Sun.

*Turner*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

OCTOBER, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38; MATT. xxviii. 19

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## GETHSEMANE

By Isaac Ambrose (1604-1663?)

(Isaac Ambrose was minister at Garstang, where he was ejected in the Great Ejection of 1662. One of the most meditative of all the Puritans, he spent a whole month each year in seclusion in the woods in prayer and meditation.)

*Of the garden into which Christ entered.*

“Then cometh Jesus with them into a place called Gethsemane” (Matt. xxvi. 36). It signifies, in special, a field, a village, but more especially a place (as we translate it) and this place was called Gethsemane, i.e. a valley of fatness. Certainly it was a most fruitful and pleasant place seated at the foot of the mount of Olives (John xviii. 1). “Jesus went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden.” Many mysteries are included in this word and I believe it is not without reason that our Saviour goes into a garden.

1. Because gardens are solitary places, fit for meditation and prayer; to this end we find Christ sometimes in a mountain and sometimes in a garden.

2. Because gardens are places fit for repose and rest. When Christ was weary with preaching, working of miracles, and doing acts of grace in Jerusalem, then He retires into this garden.

3. A garden was the place wherein we fell and, therefore, Christ made choice of a garden to begin there the greatest work of our redemption. In the first garden was the beginning of all evils, and in this garden was the beginning of our restitution from all evils. In the first garden the first Adam was overthrown by Satan, and in this garden the second Adam overcame and Satan himself was by Him overcome. In the first garden sin was contracted and we were indebted by our sins to God, and in this garden sin was paid for by that great and precious price of the blood of God. In the first garden death first made its entrance into the world, and in this garden life enters to restore us from death to life again. In the first garden Adam's liberty to sin brought himself and all of us into bondage, and in this garden, Christ being bound and fettered, we are thereby freed and restored to liberty. I might thus descant in respect of every circumstance, but this is the sum: in a garden first began our sin, and in this garden first began the passion, that great work and merit of our redemption.

4. Christ goes especially into this garden that His enemies might the more easily find Him out. The evangelist tells us that this garden was a place often frequented by Jesus Christ, so that

Judas "which betrayed Him, knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples" (John xviii. 2). Sure then He went not thither to hide Himself, but rather to expose Himself and, like a noble champion, to appear first in the field and to expect His enemies. Thus it appears to all the world that Christ's death was voluntary. "He poured forth His soul unto death" (Isa. liii. 12). "He gave Himself for our sins" (Gal. i. 4). Nay, Himself tells us, "Therefore doth My Father love Me because I lay down My life. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 17, 18). But I will not stay you at the door. Let us follow Christ into the garden and observe His prayer and His sufferings there.

*Of the prayer that Christ there made.*

Jesus entering the garden, He left His disciples at the entrance of it, and called with Him Peter, James and John. They only saw His transfiguration, the earnest of His future glory and, therefore, His pleasure was that they only should see of how great glory He would disrobe Himself, even for our sakes. He betakes Himself to His great antidote which Himself (the great Physician of our souls) prescribed to all the world. He prays to His heavenly Father; He kneels down, and not only so, but falls flat upon the ground. He prays with an intention great as His sorrow, and yet with a submission so ready as if the cup had been the most indifferent thing in the world. The form of His prayer runs thus, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

The prayer is short, but sweet. How many things needful to a prayer do we find concentrated in this one instance! Here is humility of spirit, lowliness of deportment, importunity of desire, a fervent heart, a lawful matter and a resignation to the will of God. Some think this is the most fervent prayer that ever Christ made upon earth. "If it be possible O, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"; and I think it was the greatest dereliction and submission to the will of God that ever was found upon the earth, for whether the cup might pass or not pass, He leaves it to His Father: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But what was there in the cup that made Christ pray thus earnestly that it might pass from Him? I answer:

1. *The great pain that He must endure*, buffetings, whippings, bleedings, crucifying: all the torments from first to last throughout all His body. Why, all these now came into His mind and all these were put into the cup of which He must drink.

2. *The great shame that He must undergo*; this was more than pain, as "a good name is better than precious ointment, and loving favour better than silver and gold," so is shame a greater punishment to the mind than any torture can be to the flesh. Now came

into His thoughts His apprehending, binding, judging, scorning, reviling, condemning; and O what a blush comes into the face of Christ, whilst in the cup He sees these ingredients!

3. *The neglect of men*, notwithstanding both His pain and shame. I look upon this as a greater cut to the heart of Christ than both the former, when He considered that after all His sufferings and reproaches, few would regard. O this was a bitter ingredient! Naturally, men desire if they cannot be delivered, to be pitied. It is a kind of ease to find some regard among the sons of men; it shews that they wish us well and that they would give us ease if they could, but O when it comes to this, that a poor wretch is under many sufferings and great shame and that he finds none so much as to regard all this, now, verily, it is a heavy case and hence was Christ's complaint, "Have ye no regard, O all ye that pass by the way? Consider and behold if ever there was sorrow like unto My sorrow, which was done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the days of His fierce anger\* (Lam. i. 12). Christ complains not of the sharp pains He endured, but He complains of this: "Have ye no regard?" He cries not out, "O deliver Me and save Me, but O consider and regard Me." O, this was another spear in the heart of Christ, or a bitter ingredient in this cup.

4. *The guilt of sin which He was now to undergo*: "Upon Him was laid the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). All the sins of all believers in the world, from the first creation to the last judgment, were laid on Him. O, what a weight was this! Surely one sin is like a talent of lead. O, then, what were so many thousands of millions? The very earth groans under the weight of sin until this day; David cried out that "his iniquities were a burden too heavy for him to bear." Nay, God Himself complains, "Behold, I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves" (Amos ii. 13). Now then, no wonder if Christ bearing all the sins of Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, cry out, "My soul is heavy," for sin was heavy on His soul. How bare He our sins on the tree, but by His sufferings? "And He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." How laid on Him but by imputation? "And He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." How made sin for us? Surely there was in Christ no fundamental guilt. No, no! But He was made sin by imputation and law account. He was our Surety, and so our sins were laid on Him in order to punishment, as if now in the garden He had said to His Father, "Thou hast given me a body, as I have taken the debts

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\*It will be noticed that often when the Puritans quote Scripture, the words of our Authorized Version are not followed. It would seem that they either quoted from the older translation, the Geneva Bible, or, being learned men, themselves translated immediately from the Hebrew or Greek.

and sins of all believers in the world upon Me. Come now and arrest Me as the only paymaster; lo, here I am to do and suffer for their sins whatsoever Thou pleasest." See Psa. xl. 6-8; Heb. x. 4-9. Or as if He had said to His Father thus: "O Father, I am the Surety; all My friends' wants and all their debts, let them be laid on Me. My life for their lives, My soul for their souls, My glory for their glory, My heaven for their heaven." Now, this was no small matter. Little do we know or consider what is the weight and guilt of sin. And this was another ingredient in Christ's cup.

5. *The power and malice of Satan.* The devil had a full leave and licence, not as it was with Job, "Do what thou wilt, Satan, but save his life." No, no! He had a commission without any such restriction or limitation. The whole power of darkness was let loose to use all his violence, and to afflict Him as far as possible he could, and this our Saviour intimates when He saith, "The prince of this world cometh." Now was it that the word must be accomplished, "Thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. iii. 15). The devil could go no higher than the heel of Christ, but whatever he could do, he was sure to do. He had been nibbling a great while at His heel. No sooner He was born but he would have killed Him, and after, he fell fiercely on Him in the wilderness; but now all the power and all the malice of hell conjoins. If we look on the devil in respect of his evil nature, he is compared to a roaring lion. Not only is he a lion, but a roaring lion. His disposition to do mischief is always wound up to the height, and if we look on the devil in respect of his power, the apostle gives him names above the highest comparisons, as principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness above (Eph. vi. 12). Devils are not only called princes, but principalities; not only mighty, but powers; not only rulers of a part, but of "all the darkness of this world"; not only wicked spirits, but "spiritual wickedness"; not only about us but above us—they hang over our heads continually. You know what a disadvantage it is to have your enemy get the hill, the upper ground; and this they have naturally and always. Oh then, what a combat must this be, when all the power and all the malice of all the devils in hell should (by the permission of God) arm themselves against the Son of God! Surely this was a bitter ingredient in Christ's cup.

6. *The wrath of God Himself,* this (above all) was the most bitter dreg. It lay in the bottom, and Christ must drink it also: "O, the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lam. i. 12). God afflicts some in mercy, and some in anger. This was in His anger, and yet in His anger God is not alike to all. Some He afflicts in His more gentle and mild anger, others in His fierce anger. This was in the very fierceness of His anger. It is agreed upon by all divines that now Christ saw Himself bearing the sins of all believers, and standing before the judgment seat of God. To this end are those words, "Now is the judgment of this world,

and the prince of this world shall be cast out.” “Now is the judgment of this world. Now I see God sitting in judgment upon the world; and as a right representative of all the world of believers, here I stand before His tribunal, ready to undergo all the punishments due to them for their sins. Why, there is no other way to save their souls and to satisfy justice but that the fire of Thy indignation should kindle against Me. O I know it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. O I know God is a consuming fire; who can stand before His indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. But for this end came I into the world. O my Father, I will drink this cup. Lo, here is an open breast; come, prepare the armoury of Thy wrath, and herein shoot all the arrows of revenge. And yet, O my Father, let Me not be oppressed, subverted or swallowed up by Thy wrath; let not Thy displeasure continue longer than My patience or obedience can endure. There is in Me flesh and blood in respect of My humanity, and My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee. O, if it be possible, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.”

*Of the dolours and agonies that Christ there suffered.*

1. *For His sorrow.* The evangelists diversely relate it. “He began to be sorrowful and very heavy” (Matt. xxvi. 37). “He began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy” (Mark xiv. 33). “And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly” (Luke xxii. 44). “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour” (John xii. 27). All avow this sorrow to be great, and so it is confessed by Christ Himself: “Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Ah Christians! who can speak out this sorrow? “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” (Prov. xviii. 14). Christ’s soul is sorrowful; or if that be too flat, His soul is sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful; or if that language be too low, His soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; not only extensively, such as must continue for the space of seventeen or eighteen hours, even until death itself should finish it; but also intensively, such and so great, as that which is used to be at the very point of death; and such as were able to bring death itself, had not Christ been reserved to a greater and an heavier punishment. Of this sorrow is that especially spoken: “Consider, and behold if ever there was sorrow like unto My sorrow” (Lam. i. 12). Many a sad and sorrowful soul hath no question been in the world, but the like sorrow to this was never since the creation. The very terms of the evangelists speak no less; He was sorrowful and very heavy, saith one; amazed and very heavy, saith another; in an agony, saith a third; in a soul trouble, saith a fourth. Surely the bodily torments of the cross were inferior to the agony of His soul; the pain

of the body is the body of pain. O but the very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's sorrow, and the soul's pain. It was a sorrow unspeakable and, therefore, I must leave it, as not being able to utter it.

2. *For His sweat.* Luke only relates it: "And His sweat was it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44). Here is magnitude and multitude; great drops, and those so many, so plenteous, that they went through His apparel and all streaming down to the ground. Now was it that His garments were dyed with crimson red. That of the prophet, though spoken in another sense, yet, in some respect, may be applied to this: "Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" (Isa. lxiii. 2). O what a sight is here! His head and members are all on a bloody sweat; this sweat trickles down and bedecks His garments, which stood like a new firmament studded with stars, portending an approaching storm, nor stays it there, but it "falls down to the ground." O happy garden, watered with such tears of blood! How much better are these rivers "than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," yea, than all the waters of Israel, yea, than all those rivers that water the garden of Eden?

i. *This may inform us of the weight and burden of sin, that thus presseth Christ under it till He sweat and bleed.* When the first Adam had committed the first sin, this was the penalty: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread" (Gen. iii. 19), but now the second Adam takes upon Him all the sins of all believers in the world. He sweats not only in His face, but in all His body. O then how was that face disfigured when it stood all on drops, and those drops not of a watery sweat, but of blood? All the powers of our souls and parts of our bodies were stained with sin, and therefore He sweat blood from every part. We sin, and our eyes will scarce drop a tear for sin, but His eyes and ears and head and hands, feet and heart and all run rivers of tears of blood for us, even for our sins.

Let Jesuits and friars in meditating of Christ's sufferings cry out against the Jews. In this bloody sweat I see another use. Alas! here is no Jew, no Judas, no Herod, no Pilate, no scribe, no Pharisee. Here is no tormentor to whip Him, no soldiers to crown His head with thorns. Here are neither nails nor spear to fetch His blood out of His body. How comes it then to pass? Is there any natural cause? Ah no! The night is cold which naturally draws blood inwards. In the open air He lies grovelling on the ground and there "He sweats and bleeds." "O my heart, who hath done this deed?" "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." So saith David; when Nathan replied upon him, "Thou art the man." O my heart, my sinful heart! O my sinful, deceitful, abominable heart, *thou art*

the murderer! *Thy sin sat upon the heart of Christ as heavy as a mountain of lead or iron when none was near but a few dull, heavy, sleepy disciples. Then all the sins of believers—and amongst them thy sins—fell upon the soul of Christ as so many murderers, and squeezed blood and made Him cry out, “My soul is heavy; heavy unto death.” Go thy way now and weep with Peter and say with David, “I have sinned against the Lord.” O how should these eyes of mine look upon Christ thus sweating, bleeding, streaming out blood, great drops of blood, from all the parts and members of His body, but I must “mourn over Him as one that mourneth for his only son; but I must be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zech. xii. 10).*

ii. *This may inform us of the extraordinary love of Christ.* It is said of the pelican that when her young ones are struck with the tail of some poisonous serpent, she presently strikes her breast with her beak or bill, and so lets out her own blood as a medicine for them, that they may suck and live. Even so Christ seeing us struck with the poison of sin, He is impatient of delay; He would not stay till the Jews let Him bleed with their whips, and thorns, and nails: “I have a baptism to be baptized with (saith Christ) and how am I straightened till it be accomplished.” He is big with love and, therefore, He opens all His pores of His own accord; He lets blood gush out from every part and therefore He makes a precious balsam to cure our wounds. O the love of Christ! As Elihu could sometimes say, “Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles” (Job xxxii. 19), so the heart of Christ was full, even of love, so full that it could not hold, but it burst out through every part and member of His body in a bloody sweat.

I will not say but that every drop of Christ's blood was very precious; but certainly that blood which was not forced by whips or thorns or spear is to be had in singular honour. As the myrrh that by incision of the tree flows out is very precious, yet that which drops out of its own accord is accounted first and choice; and as the balsam which way soever it come is sweet, yet that which falls of its own accord is held the most pure and odoriferous. This is certain: at this time no manner of violence was offered Him in body; no man touched Him or came near Him. In a cold night (for they were fain to have a fire within doors) lying abroad in the air and upon cold earth, He casts Himself into a sweat of blood. Surely love is hot. He had a fire in His breast that melts Him into this bloody sweat! O wonderful love!

iii. *This may inform us of the design of Christ in these very sufferings.* “Christ weeps” (saith Bernard) “not only in His eyes, but in all His members, that with the tears of His body He might wash and purify His body, which is the church.” Or Christ weeps blood, that He might give us a sign of the enemies' ruin. Sweat in sickness is as a crisis, or promising sign, that nature with

all her force hath striven against the peccant humour and hath now overcome it; so this bloody sweat is a blessed crisis, or argument of sin decaying, and that the Lamb hath overthrown the lion. As Christ sometimes said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

Thus far of Christ's passion before His apprehension. And now we may suppose it about midnight, the very time which Christ called "the hour and power of darkness."

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## HUMILITY

*From Thomas Manton on Isaiah liii*

Learn to be mean and low for Christ as He was for you. Christ was poor that you might be rich—rich in peace, joy, comfort, salvation. Can you find such a rare instance as would be poor for Christ that he may be rich in His glory, in His ordinances, in the safety of His servants? We have read of many that have been poor for their lusts, that have prodigally lavished away their estates upon their pleasures; but very few have been poor for Christ. "Let the same mind be in you that was in Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5). The apostle applieth it to humility, and we may also to the same purpose. Do you have as bountiful a disposition to God as Christ had for you? Can anything be too much for Him? If a man truly serveth God, he would come as near Him as possibly he could. Well, Christ cast away His glory for you; do you cast away your riches for Christ, not by a vowed poverty but by a voluntary laying out yourselves for His word, His cause and gospel? It is not waste where all is due; and indeed nothing is lost that is laid out upon God. "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Therefore, if you do, as Ahaz's dial, go back ten degrees in your estate or outward pomp, the nearer will you come to the pattern. There is one who has quitted more for you than you can possibly quit for Him.

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## GRACE REIGNING IN ADOPTION

*By Abraham Booth*

Those whom God has justified and admitted into a state of reconciliation with Himself, He has also adopted for His children, that they might enjoy all the blessings of grace and the unknown riches of glory, not only by the favour of friendship, though that be of the noblest kind, but also by an indisputable right of inheritance, which right they have in virtue of adoption.

The word *adoption* signifies that act by which a person takes the child of another, not related to him, into the place, and entitles him to the privileges of his own son. In the Grecian and Roman states it was customary for a man of wealth, in default of

issue from his own body, to make choice of some person upon whom he put his name, requiring him to relinquish his own family, never to return to it again, and to proclaim him publicly his heir. The person thus adopted was legally entitled to the inheritance upon the decease of his adopter, and though, before, he was entirely void of all claim to such a benefit, or any expectation of it, was invested with the same privileges as if he had been born an heir to his benefactor. That spiritual and divine adoption, about which we write, is God's gracious admission of strangers and aliens into the state, relation, and enjoyment of all the privileges of children through Jesus Christ, according to that glorious promise of the new covenant: "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Reconciliation, justification, and adoption may be thus distinguished. In *reconciliation*, God is considered as the sovereign Lord and the injured party, and the sinner as an enemy to Him. In *justification*, our Maker sustains the character of the supreme Judge, and man is considered as a guilty criminal standing before His tribunal. In *adoption*, the Source of all mercies appears as a Father, and the apostate sons of Adam as aliens from Him, as belonging to the family of Satan, and denominated *children of wrath*. In reconciliation we are made *friends*, in justification we are pronounced *righteous*, and in adoption we are constituted *heirs*, and have a declared right to the eternal inheritance.

That believers are the children of God, the Scriptures expressly declare. They may be so called as they are begotten and born from above, as they stand in a marriage-relation to Christ, and as they are adopted into the heavenly family. These different ways in which the Scripture speaks of their filial relation to God are intended to aid our feeble conceptions when we think upon the grand, ineffable blessing, one mode of expression supplying, in some degree, the ideas that are wanting in another. To express the original of spiritual life and the restoration of the divine image, we are said to be *born* of God. To set forth in the liveliest manner our most intimate and delightful union with the Son of the Highest, we are said to be *married* to Christ. That we might never forget the misery of our natural condition as a state of alienation from God, and at the same time to intimate to us our title to the heavenly patrimony, we are said to be *adopted* by Him. The condition, therefore, of all believers is most noble and excellent. Their high birth, their divine Husband and everlasting inheritance loudly proclaim it. The beloved apostle was so amazed at the love of God, manifested in the privilege of adoption, that he could not forbear crying out, with astonishment and rapture: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." *Here grace reigns*. The vessels of mercy were predestinated to the enjoyment of this honour and happiness before the world began. The great Lord of all chose

them for Himself, chose them for His children, that they might be "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." This He did, not because of any worthiness in them, but of His own sovereign will. As it is written: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." "According to the good pleasure of His will"; this is the eternal source of the heavenly blessing. "By Jesus Christ"; this is the way of its communication to the sinner. "To the praise of the glory of His grace"; this is the end of bestowing it.

The persons adopted are sinners of Adam's race; such who, considered in their natural state, are estranged from God and guilty before Him, under sentence of death, and obnoxious to ruin. Their translation, therefore, out of this deplorable condition into a state and relation so glorious is an instance of reigning, triumphant, boundless grace. That the children of wrath should become the inheritors of glory, and the slaves of the devil be acknowledged as the sons of Jehovah; that the enemies of God should ever be adopted into His family, and have an indefeasible right to all the privileges of His children; this is astonishing to the last degree. Our character and state by nature are the most indigent, wretched, and abominable; such as render us fit for nothing, after this life, but to dwell with accursed fiends and damned spirits in the abodes of darkness and despair. But, by the privilege of adoption, we rightfully bear a character, and are brought into such a state, as render us fit to associate with saints in light, with angels in glory. What but grace, the riches of grace, omnipotent, reigning grace, could be sufficient to effect so noble, so astonishing, so divine a change?

If we take a cursory view of those invaluable privileges which the saints enjoy by adoption, and of which they are heirs, our ideas of the superlative blessing will be still heightened. They have the most honourable character, for they are called not merely the servants, or the friends, but *the sons of God*. This dignified character is unalterable, for the Lord Himself declares that it is "an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." If David so highly esteemed the character of son-in-law to an earthly king, how much more should believers esteem the title of *the sons of God*, of Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords! They are also called kings and priests, and are represented under a rich variety of august and venerable titles, obvious to every intelligent reader of the sacred writings. The dignity of their relation is immensely great. For, being the children of God, Jehovah Himself is their Father, and Christ acknowledges them for His brethren. Nor do they stand in relation to Jesus merely as brethren; they are also His bride. Their conjugal relation to Him is such that nothing can be conceived more honourable or more beneficial. For He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. When David,

though not yet in possession of the crown, sent his men to Abigail to take her to wife, that discreet widow “ bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” Now, may not the believer, for infinitely greater reasons, with gratitude and astonishment adore the beneficent hand which broke off his yoke of basest vassalage, and joined him to David’s Antitype, the heavenly Bridegroom, joined him in a marriage covenant that shall never be broken, in a union that shall never be dissolved?

Again, believers, being children of God, are the objects of His paternal affection and unremitting care. As a Father, He guides them by His counsel, and guards them by His power. Their disobedience He visits with a rod of correction, and in all their distresses He feels for them with the bowels of parental compassion. In all His dealings with them He manifests His love, and causes all things to work together for their good. Yes, they are the darlings of providence, and the charge of angels. Those ministering spirits, who are as active as flame and as swift as thought, encamp around them, and, in ways unknown to mortals, subserve the designs of grace in promoting their best interests.

Further, nothing can exceed the riches and excellency of that inheritance to which they have a right in virtue of their adoption, that eternal inheritance, which is bequeathed to them by an irrevocable testament. This testament, recorded in the sacred writings, was confirmed by the blood of Christ. The inheritance includes all the blessings of grace here, and the full fruition of glory hereafter. Yea, even the blessings of providence are theirs, and are dispensed to them so far as infinite wisdom sees necessary to their temporal good, their spiritual welfare, and the glory of God. For godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come; and their heavenly Father knoweth that they have need of His providential favours so long as they continue in their present state. So that, whether they be things temporal, spiritual, or eternal, whether they be things present, or things to come, all, *all* are theirs. According to that admirable text: “ All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.” But, which is more emphatical, and the highest that words can express, the utmost our ideas can reach, the divine Spirit declares that they are “ heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” Each, therefore, has a right to say, Jehovah Himself is my Portion, my Reward, my Inheritance. Yea, such is the mutual propriety which God and His people have in each other that the inheritance is reciprocal between them. “ The portion of Jacob is not like them; for He is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of His inheritance: the Lord of hosts is His Name ” (Jer. x. 16). All the awful, the amiable, the adorable attributes of the Deity will appear glorious in the children of God, and be enjoyed

by them to their everlasting honour and unutterable bliss, to the consummation of their sublime happiness in an eternal world. What can the heart of man desire more? Or, what good thing will God withhold from them, for whom He gave His Son, to whom He gives Himself?

Once more, in testimony to this, their sublime relation, and as an earnest of their future inheritance, they receive the "Spirit of adoption," by which they cry, with appropriation and confidence, "Abba, Father." The Spirit of adoption, as opposed to the spirit of bondage, is a Spirit of light and liberty, of consolation and joy. He glorifies Christ in the believer's view, and sheds divine love abroad in his heart. He brings the promises to his remembrance, and enables him to plead them at the throne of grace, according to his various wants. He elevates the affections to heavenly things, and seals him, as an heir of the kingdom, to the day of redemption. Such are the privileges of God's adopted sons, in the vouchsafement of which, *grace reigns*. What a mercy might we esteem it not to be confounded before the God of heaven! What a favour to obtain the least indulgent regard from the eternal King! What an honour to be admitted into His family, to occupy the place, and bear the character of the meanest servant! But to be His adopted children, who is the Fountain of all bliss, and His espoused bride, who is the Sovereign of all worlds, to have Him for our everlasting Father, who is the Former of all things, and Him for our Husband, who is the Object of angelic worship—these are blessings divinely rich indeed! That sinful mortals, who may justly say to corruption, Thou art our father, and to the worm, Thou art our mother and sister—that any such should be permitted to say to the infinite God, Thou art our portion; all that Thou hast and all that Thou art are ours, to render us completely happy and eternally blessed—this is an astonishing, delightful, transporting thought! These are blessings than which none greater can be conceived, none more glorious granted or enjoyed.

Let the grandees of the earth, and the sons of the mighty, boast of their high birth and large revenues, their pompous titles and splendid retinues, their delicate fare and costly array; still the poorest peasant, that believes in Christ, is infinitely superior to them all. What though they shine in silk and embroidery, or glitter in gold and jewels, though their names be adorned with the highest epithets that men can bestow, while a profusion of worldly riches is poured into their lap, yet they must soon, very soon, lie down in the dust. On a level with the meanest of mortals, the worms shall quickly cover them, and their memory shall rot. But your name, O weakest of Christians, your new name is everlasting. However neglected or despised among men, it shall stand for ever fair in the book of life, for ever conspicuous in the records of Jehovah. What though you walk in the vale of life, though you are not pointed out as a person of eminence while you proceed

on your pilgrimage, nor receive the acclamations of the people, yet you are high in the estimation of heaven, nor destitute of the sublimest honours. Your praise is not of men, but of God. He knows the way that you take, and points you out to angels as the object of their regard. Though you cannot boast of illustrious ancestors and noble blood, yet, being born from above, the blood royal of heaven runs in your veins. Though you are not a favourite of the prince, yet, like a prince, you have power with the God of Israel. Though ever so poor in temporals, the unsearchable riches of Christ are all your own. Though your mansion be a cobwebbed cottage, though you have not a numerous train of attendants, yet the holy angels are your guard and minister to your good, while the God of glory not only condescends to come under your lowly roof, but even to dwell with you. Yours is the honourable character; yours is the happy state. This is happiness which all the wealth of the Indies cannot procure. This is honour which all the crowned heads in the world cannot confer. The Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all other glory, but this honour shall never be laid in the dust. What a shade it casts on every worldly distinction, to be forced to feel how very fleeting it is! How encouraging the remembrance of the durable and exalted happiness of the sons of God! Christianity! it is thine alone to ennoble the human mind, and make it really great. Grace! it is thine alone to raise the poor from the dunghill, and the needy out of the dust. Thine it is to number them among the princes of heaven, and seat them on the thrones of glory.

And now, reader, what is *your* character? You probably call yourself a Christian. If you are so in reality, you are a child of God and an adopted heir of immortal glory. Do you know, then, by experience, what are the privileges attendant on such a state, and connected with such a character? If not, you bear the name in vain. So far from being a Christian, you are—how shall I speak it? can you believe it? can pride forgive it?—you are an enemy to God and a child of the devil. For these two characters, “the children of God” and “the seed of the serpent” include all mankind. Consider, then, where to class yourself, and what is your proper name.

Are you a believer? a child of God by adoption, and an heir of eternal riches? Be careful, then, to act agreeably to your high character and exalted privileges. Let the children of this world satisfy their little minds, and be captivated by the low enjoyments and perishing vanities of the present state; but you should disdain to act upon their principles, or to be governed by their maxims. The riches of the world, which engross the cares of the covetous, the honours of the world, which are so earnestly pursued by the ambitious, and the pleasures of the world, in which the sensualist delights, you should be far from desiring. Why should you be discontented at the want of that which, though enjoyed in all its

fulness, could not make you happy? Equally far should you be from performing religious duties on the same principles, and with the same views, as the legal moralist and selfish pharisee; which generally are, either the applause of men, or their own acceptance with God. *That* is the most abominable hypocrisy in the sight of Him who searches the heart, and stands abhorred by every generous mind; *this* is a criminal usurpation of the office of Christ, and the highest dishonour to His undertaking; for it proceeds on a supposition that the work of our Lord is either not perfect in itself, or not free for the sinner. The former reflects on His power, or faithfulness, and the latter on His grace, both which are equally far from honouring the adored Redeemer, under His sacred and cheering character, JESUS. The children of light should act from the most generous motives, and for the sublimest end. Love to their heavenly Father, and gratitude to the bleeding Saviour, should ever be the fruitful source of all their obedience, and the glory of the eternal God, the exalted end.

Again, are you an heir of the kingdom? You should be careful to preserve a steady conduct in the church of God and in the world; not only to be zealous for your Father's honour for a season, or, as we vulgarly say, by fits and starts, but maintain a uniform and consistent behaviour through the whole tenor of your conduct. Endeavour to make it appear that you are a diligent servant as well as a dignified son of God. Your practice should be, as much as possible, agreeable to your holy profession and glorious hope. Remember that as your gracious Father and loving Husband, your glorious relatives and bright inheritance are all above, there also should be your heart and your conversation. For though you are an heir of a kingdom, it is not of this world; and though you are in, you are not of the world. Nor will you have any reason to be surprised or ashamed if the world should hate you. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise," the children of God undoubtedly ought, above all others, to "think on these things." For no man can free himself from the odious charges of being a dishonour to Christ and a reproach to his Christian profession, if he live under the dominion of sin and be a servant of Satan. Such a person, whatever speculative knowledge he may have of the doctrine of grace, or whatever his profession of love to it may be, is destitute of the faith of the gospel, and an enemy to the cross of Christ, is a stumbling-block in the way of weak souls, and, dying in such a condition, will feel a severer vengeance, will fall under double damnation, to all eternity.

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God does not put any of His children into the furnace till He has inlaid them with an incorruptible treasure.

*Huntington*

## SPIRITUAL HUSBANDRY

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. W. Tyler at Robertsbridge Harvest Thanksgiving Services on Wednesday evening, November 25th, 1970*

*(The afternoon sermon appeared last month)*

**Text:** "For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns" (Jer. iv. 3).

This may be an unusual text, but I will just refer to the visitation of the Lord to my spirit this morning concerning it. I was thinking on the day here at Robertsbridge, the last thanksgiving day in the year for the harvest in our churches, and realising that we have already known this year, and every year, two harvests. One, the garnering of precious souls to the heavenly garner of glory. Think of the fruit fully ripened which has been now gathered to heaven's ineffable light, bliss, glory. What a harvest! Although the cup is mingled—there is great grief—yet it is mitigated because there are those here who are assured that they too will see the Saviour in the ineffable glory and light of heaven, and be reunited with those who have gone before. I am convinced that we shall be together eternally around the throne. So what a harvest! I referred also to the harvest in Zion: the ingathering of precious souls passing through the waters of baptism to the Lord's table and into the communion of the saints. And to have participated in it! It is an amazing mercy on the part of the Lord to bestow this on us. It has gathered and transported us toward heaven. It is an amazing favour.

While thinking on the thanksgiving for this harvest, and the wonderful bountiful harvest of grain and fruit, I saw a large area of land, a tract which undoubtedly grew corn. This morning as I looked, I was struck by the fact that it had been ploughed up. It looked beautiful with its straight furrows. It was a seed thought in my mind: *this is harvest, and we must start ploughing again.* The word came and I found it to be acceptable and altogether congruous.

You know that *fallow* ground has several meanings. It may be ground which has never been cultivated; it is wild, growing weeds, briars, thorns and thistles. I believe if you received information, you would find that the World Council for Agriculture has turned its mind to large areas of desert and has proceeded to cultivate them because of the immense demand. Many areas which have been a waste-howling wilderness are now cultivated. It was an excellent thought to me. I said, "Lord, are there not areas of land yet for Thee to deal with, that Thy church may be prospered?" The plough has never entered their fallow ground. The majority (I do not judge them) of the immense population is evidently fallow ground. You take the great city with its nine million inhabitants, how many of them fear God? Though we

are in the favoured county of Sussex, the churches here are almost dying. You who have loved ones, there is no doubt your heart gives a spring. You say, "Lord, *there* is fallow ground. I love them, but where are they?" What is growing? Nothing but thorns and briars. What a potential if this ground is embraced by electing love! The Lord will break up the fallow ground, the ungracious heart; it will be rich with spiritual fruit. You may hope in God. Look at your own town; you may say to the Lord, "Is there fallow ground here?" I found this word to be full of hope. It comes powerfully, pointedly to us if we have a large family circle. So this is one facet.

Another which I found acceptable, and sorrowful, is a land that has been fruitful, that has been termed the Lord's garden. You know how quickly it deteriorates. There is your own case, and you cannot close your eyes to it and say, "All the men at the prayer meeting said the same. They felt destitute, and so on; so I need not be worried." Don't take this sop from the devil and settle on your lees. Be concerned about your own case. "Break up your fallow ground." It needs another ploughing. So I found the word acceptable.

I have often suggested, when I thought of the early days when I was in deep soul trouble, that I must have a reviving of it; powerful conviction and the two cutting blades of the plough again in the heart. Is it true that you would be daily convinced of sin? Do you claim to possess spiritual discernment, enough to discern the case of others? If you have any discernment, I will put a straight question to you. What is the state of your garden, your *heart*, tonight? One said,

"Lord, my heart, a desert vast.  
Thy reviving hand requires."

Is that true? Do you feel barren? What about the weeds, briars, thorns? The Lord is very explicit. He tells us what thorns are: the cares and concerns of life, the deceitfulness of riches, the things of the flesh. These are thorns. How do we stand? *Cares and concerns*. You say, "This is inevitable." It means excessive, inordinate, God-dishonouring care for the things of life, so that they have priority over the things of everlasting life. They are burdens, thorns, and snares to a child of God. *The deceitfulness of riches*. Although this is little known by the majority of the people of God, it is a root evil. Some of you remember the days when it was hard work to live; now things are different. Part of the effect is to lull to sleep. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." O the deceitfulness of riches! "For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. xxiii. 5). *And pleasure*. It is a day of pleasure, of excess, of fleshly indulgence. There is no propensity of the flesh that is

barred today. It is very solemn. It may not affect you directly, individually, but the spirit of the world infects the church. The spirit of the world is contagious, like leprosy, and infectious. You may not be (and it is to be wished you are not) guilty in practice, but are we immune from the spirit of indulgence of the flesh? You see what thorns are—pleasures. Mr. Philpot said, "Everything that pleases your flesh deadens your spirit." It does not matter what it is. You try the test. These are thorns, *and lusts*; lusts are thorns. "Break up your fallow ground." There is deterioration; plough it up. This is merciful.

A word on the plough and the ploughman. I suggested to you how we see the soil, and in its native state, because of the curse, it is growing weeds and briars. I know we must make allowance for herbs and wayside flowers. You see an area of land. What does it need? Labourers to work it in accordance with the direction of our blessed Lord and Master. The ministry is not mechanised; it is hard labour. I think the day will come when you have mechanised religion. That is why I fear that certain things known today in our churches may be abused. I dread to think of the time when people in a place of worship say: "It does not matter if we have no minister. Put the tape recorder in the pulpit." I have never said this before. It is exceedingly solemn. I have committed myself. I feel it strongly. We do not want a scientific ministry, but a ministry of the Spirit. *Labourers*. You need labourers in any field. When it gets to an advanced state of mechanisation, it becomes artificial; it cuts across nature, and it will never succeed. The human race is bringing itself to destruction by these and other means. None ever fight God and prosper. This is an age of artificiality, of interfering with the laws of God. The end will be destruction.

So down to the end of time, while the Lord has a part to be broken up, you will have *labourers*. This shows you the nature and calibre of Holy Ghost anointed labourers. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." I know you may say, "This does not altogether apply to me." It does. Whom do you seek? Is it not a labourer? So the Lord commissions labourers. I am clear before God, according to my conscience. The point I wish to make is: to break up the fallow ground, there are men divinely authorised; they put their hand to the plough. I believe, if I am not completely mistaken, it was August, 1936, when I put my hand to the plough. I was a hearer, and in the middle of divine service the Lord spoke to my soul. In the twinkling of an eye I put my hand to the plough.

This especially in the gospels relates to the work of the ministry. In varying degrees it applies to His saints in the offices of the church, and in following the Lord and fulfilling that which is wellpleasing in His sight. It is a good many years ago (some

look back longer), when by the sovereign, almighty, efficacious power of the Spirit, they put their hand to the plough. Now the Lord says, "Use it." You will never sow any seed nor have a harvest unless you use the plough. The minister has a part: ploughing, sowing, reaping. Every God-sent minister does a little of each and he must be skilled in the use of the plough. I wonder if we skilfully, ably plough? How much is accomplished? It is truly remarkable. A skilled ploughman will plough a large area of land, and the furrows are beautifully symmetrical and parallel. You wonder how it is possible. Of course, there is a secret. It has been expressed spiritually in the Word of God. Do not look on the ground, on the furrow: keep your eye fixed on a mark before you. So we "keep our eyes on Jesus fixed," and as favoured to do so, those furrows will be parallel, and in harmony and conformity with the truth of God, His will, way and immutable Word. It is wonderful to plough thus.

I said, from the early days of primitive man, he had wisdom to construct a plough with two cutting blades. One commences to enter the soil, the second cuts deeper and turns the soil over. This is the work of the Spirit in the ministry. The first blade begins to penetrate; the other penetrates more deeply. It turns the heart and its contents to view, to the light. What a ploughing! How necessary it is! This demonstrates a little of ploughing. You will find by the Spirit this was accomplished in our first parents following their awful fall. The first blade entered when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. The blade entered into their hearts. Then the second blade: the Lord God called to Adam, Where art thou? The blade went right in and exposed to them their fallen, ruined, wretched, undone condition. The Lord grant it to us. Another case is that of His servant David. Sin had hardened his spirit, and the Lord sent His prophet to break up the fallow ground. The plough went right in. "Thou art the man."

I wonder if the plough has gone into our hearts this year? The remarkable thing is, where there is the life of God in a soul under a settled ministry and the Lord begins to put the plough in, it is a painful experience to the hearer. It is because of what God has done in the heart of a minister. It is solemn if we never disturb the surface. But how painful it is when the Lord puts the plough into the heart! It is remarkable that those souls do not know how to bear the ministry; it seems to cut them up. Yet they are there for the next service! There is nothing else they cleave to but faithfulness. One might tell them they could go a hundred miles, or over the road, and have an easy line, but they say, No! I will cleave to this. It ploughs me up." I believe there is a great degree of encouragement felt here in the heart of a minister led by the Spirit, that these souls cleave to that which condemns them, which shows them their wretched state. They are ploughed up.

In the old days—and it is still the case—many souls under the ministry were cut off and cut down; left with nothing. Presently everything is completely turned. There is a harrowing. Plough it up and leave it as it is. Let the frost crumble it. There is no pride there. Turn it up, let the frost do its work. This is all in the economy of God. Presently the heart is crumbled, melted, broken. Everything changes. You receive the good seed of the gospel and the early rain. It is spring. The sun shines. There are showers of divine blessing, and the ministry that cut you to the quick, comforts, cheers, builds you up.

“Break up your fallow ground”. This is the economy of God, and what is the whole exercise and objective? So that there shall be fruit to eternal life, to His glory and honour. So that one generation shall praise His works to another. So that children yet unborn shall praise Him. So that the children of His servants shall continue, and their seed be established before Him. So the Lord shall build up Zion and appear in His glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. That is the objective, so that presently there shall be the general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven, a mighty company called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, around the throne for ever to sing His glorious praises.

So it is an honour to labour. It is a favour to be commissioned to put one's hand to the plough; to labour in His vineyard; to spend and be spent, so that there shall be a royal seed, a blessed inheritance, a number which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb. Amen.

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### HITHERTO

*The experience of Miss Ruth Beesley, member of the church at The Dicker, who died on December 25th, 1969, aged 80.*

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#### Early Days

I was born at Polebrook, near Oundle, Northants, in 1889 and was favoured with godly parents, both being members of Oundle Strict Baptist church. We moved to Peterborough when I was four years old and attended Salem Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel there. As a child I had many solemn thoughts of the day of judgment. My dear mother taught me that little prayer:

“Lord teach a little child to pray,  
Thy grace betimes impart;  
And grant Thy Holy Spirit may  
Renew my youthful heart.”

But these desires passed off and I began to want to go into the world. Going to chapel one week evening to see a dear friend

baptized, these words came solemnly to me, "Where will you spend eternity?" yet my desire was to go into the world. After this I was in great sorrow, feeling I had resisted the Holy Spirit. My beloved mother had always taught us to read God's Word and good books. One evening when fourteen years old and reading John xv, the Holy Spirit convinced me that there was something in real religion that I was a stranger to. Instantly the desire to go into the world left me and my desire was to seek the Lord with all my heart. This led me to the week night services at Salem. My cry was:

"Convince me of my sin,  
Then lead to Jesus' blood;  
And to my wondering view reveal  
The secret love of God."

One dear aged friend used to pray at the prayer meeting for those who desired to desire. This suited me well; I did so long for true conviction of sin. The two first verses in hymn 1092 ("Till God the sinner's mind illumine") were suitable to me. I felt so dead and lifeless and longed for eternal life and true conviction of sin. A sermon preached by Mr Stonelake of Nottingham: "And did all eat the same spiritual meat," made a deep impression on me. It made me long to eat the same spiritual meat that His dear people eat. How I loved His dear people and loved to be in their company! Then a sermon preached by Mr. Fred Kirby of Staplehurst made a deep impression on me from the text, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." My desire was to be deeply convinced of sin as Mr. Kirby was and to have the same revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as he had to my soul, but I used to feel like "a limping beggar, clothed in rags."

### **Deep Distress and Liberty**

Sorry to say I went on like this until I was eighteen and then had to go to Leicester to nurse my eldest sister over her last confinement. She had heart trouble and the dear baby boy was afflicted with hare lip and split palate, which was very serious. The doctor told me it depended on me whether the child lived or died. I must feed him every half hour with one spot of food at a time. He had great difficulty in taking this; also he was to be prepared for an operation when he was six weeks old. This caused me constantly to pray that I might be enabled to feed him and not choke him and that God would let him live. He graciously answered my poor prayer. Having to feed the dear baby, and my sister ill, I had to remain in Leicester.

When nineteen, the Holy Spirit convinced me deeply what a great sinner I was in His holy sight. I felt lost and that perish I must and drop into hell. I felt entirely ignorant of the way of

salvation, although having always attended chapel. That verse helped me: "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." This experience lasted for some weeks but the burden of sin became heavier and I felt completely lost and that I must sink into hell. Eventually the dear Lord came with almighty power and spoke these words to my soul: "Your life is hid with Christ in God," and I was given such a faith's view of the Lord Jesus suffering on the cross for my sin, together with the words, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The mercy and love of God to my soul was amazing. "Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound!) That saved a wretch like me." I was taught a much deeper knowledge of myself as a sinner in God's holy sight, and sank in great distress of soul, when these words were applied with divine power: "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and I had a sweet assurance that they were shed for me.

### **Trials and Deliverances**

The dear Lord hid His face again and being in great trouble and distress I went to Zion Sabbath School. Our beloved teacher, Miss Josephine Orton, took for our lesson Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, and I received such great help from the verse, "Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of Thy people Israel" (I Ki. viii. 41); if these strangers pray towards this house, the Lord Jesus Christ, He would save them. Miss Orton said if the Lord could save her, he could save any one of us, and a little hope was given that He could save me. That evening Satan dared me to go to Zion Chapel because I was such a sinner, and that if I went, I should drop down dead and be in hell; but I was compelled to go. Mr. Hazlerigg was not well enough to preach that evening so Mr. Lenton, our deacon, read Isaiah lv commencing with the words, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." It just seemed as if there was only the Lord and myself in the chapel as the Lord sweetly spoke those words to my soul. I was a bankrupt soul, nothing to pay with, and my soul did thirst for the living water which only God could give.

But the Lord soon withdrew His blessed presence. We had a read sermon that evening from the text, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing," and the service closed with hymn 912, "Salvation by grace, how charming the sound." I went straight home and to my bedroom, and had to fall on my knees begging for mercy. Suddenly the Lord came with divine power into my soul with

the above text; also, "The Lord that made both heaven and earth, And was Himself made man," etc., showing me that He had chosen me in Christ before the world began. I realised the eternal love of God and that Jesus was the eternal Son of God and that I could never finally fall; that "His delights were with the sons of men"; and that He was rejoicing over such a wretched sinner as I with singing; that He had saved me with His everlasting salvation. I sang for joy at His great mercy.

I went to my home at Peterborough for Christmas and there, in the very room where for years I had begged to be truly convinced of sin, I could now thank Him for answering my poor cries and rejoice in Him as my Saviour and Redeemer. I was completely overcome with the love of God to me and wanted to be alone to praise Him for His covenant love and faithfulness. This rich blessing lasted many days.

I was very troubled one evening by the following words coming to me:

"But when, like a sheep that strays from the fold,  
To Jesus thy Lord thy love shall grow cold,  
Think not He'll reject thee, howe'er He reprove;  
For though He correct thee, He'll rest in His love."

In my first love I felt it impossible to stray from my beloved Lord, He was so precious to me, and little thought at that time what a heart like mine would do, how the devil would aim at my overthrow. Returning to Leicester feeling sad at leaving home again, the words came with power and gave me submission to His will: "What though I can't His going see," etc. Then shortly afterwards the dear Lord gave me the following words with divine power: "The Saviour lives no more to die," etc. Thus the dear Lord brought me to realise that I was justified, that He rose for my justification, and that now He lives to intercede for me. O the joy and peace this truth gave me! I felt filled with the love and mercy of God. Shortly afterwards He gave me these sweet words: "To present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in His sight." Thus the dear Lord gave me sweet assurance. I was lost in wonder, love and praise and longed to be taken to heaven to praise Him.

I did not know how to work I was so filled with the love of God and had to ask Him to stay His hand. My body was overcome with His love and mercy. I felt I must "tell to sinners round What a dear Saviour I had found," and that if I did not, the very stones would cry out. Jesus said to me, "If ye love Me keep My commandments," and I longed to keep His commandments. To take this step seemed impossible as I had only been attending Zion for such a short time, and felt the church could not receive me on that account. I had never spoken to anyone on these things and feared to approach Mr Hazlerigg on the matter. Not daring

to take this step, I just felt cast from heaven to hell.

[Miss Beesley then gives an account of several profitable hearing times during the next few years.]

Eventually Mr. S. Champion became pastor at Leicester. The first text that I was specially helped under was Psa. ciii. 3: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." Then Psa. xxxi. 15: "My times are in Thy hands." This was a very special help as, at that time, I was ill and was forced to resign my post. When able I applied for another post and should have liked it, but it would have meant my selling novels, which I could not possibly do. I went home and as soon as I got in, I was told that a lady had sent for me. I went to see her and she engaged me straightway. I have so many times proved that all my times are in His blessed hands.

### A Mysterious Experience

Then came a special blessing, when I felt constrained to come forward as a candidate for baptism. A dear aged deacon said to me, "Tonight's sermon was all for you, and if you do not come forward, you will be in trouble." I replied, "I feel the same. I went to see Mr. Champion and he arranged for me to see the deacons. As soon as I had spoken to Mr. Champion, I was the subject of the most fierce temptations, Satan telling me I was not a real child of God, and the Lord hid His blessed face. I was in dreadful trouble, but was helped to see the deacons and they very kindly received me. I went before the church and was received un-animously.

But the severe temptations and the Lord hiding His face made me very ill and I felt there was no hope for me. I was in prison and felt condemned, and felt I should never come out of that prison. I had to go home with a complete breakdown and was not able to go back to Zion to be baptized. I was in severe pain spiritually and bodily; I felt under such condemnation.

One dear servant of God, Mr. J. T. Wiles of St. Ives, was preaching at Peterborough and, knowing how great was my distress, felt he must see me, so I went to see him. We had a close conversation, and he encouraged me to hope in God, and quoted the text: "Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Mr. Wiles said, "It is absolutely impossible for you to get beyond God's *uttermost*. The Lord is faithful and He will bring you through." It helped me, and each time he came to preach at Peterborough, he tried to encourage me to hope in God, and he had the joy of seeing my deliverance, although it was years afterwards. Then how we rejoiced and praised God together for His mercy and love to such a sinner as I.

I was at home for eighteen months, and then went as temporary help to Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Gascoigne of Wellingborough,

and there I had some profitable conversations with Mr. Gascoigne which helped me spiritually.

[Miss Beesley then records how a situation in London was provided for her].

Sometimes I felt encouraged to hope the Lord would appear for me, but the full deliverance for which I longed did not come. During a visit to my sister in September, we attended the prayer meeting at Grove Road Chapel, Eastbourne, and very much enjoyed it. I had to return to London that evening which meant that I was very late reaching home, and never having previously slept in a house alone, I felt rather afraid. I knelt down and asked the Lord to take care of me, and instantly felt surrounded by the Lord's presence. The words followed, "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." This meant so much to me—to realise His gracious presence. All fear of being in the house alone was taken away, and I had a good night's rest. I received various helps by the way and longed to be baptized through the text being applied, "But it is good for me to draw near to God." "I have put my trust in the Lord God that I may declare all Thy works." But I needed more divine assurance in my soul to take that solemn step.

### **A Dreadful "Accident"**

On 15th August, 1932, I left London for a fortnight's change at Llandudno, North Wales, to spend a fortnight's holiday with a dear friend from Leicester, and we had many spiritual talks on the way. On Lord's day evening, we went to chapel, and the text that evening was: "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This had a weighty effect on me.

On Tuesday, August 23rd, my dear friend, Mrs. Anderson, and I went for a walk along the Marine Drive on the Great Orme, having a close spiritual conversation. It being near lunch time, we got on the tram at the halfway engine house to go down to the bottom of the Great Orme, and had only been on the tram two minutes when the draw bar, which controls the tram, snapped. The tram gathered speed and ran into a stone wall killing the driver of the tram. My friend and I sat behind the driver; she was not injured but received shock. The coping stone of the wall came through the tram window on to my head, and I received a lacerated brain and fractured base of the skull. I was quite unconscious and was laid on a lady's lawn by the tramway.

My friend was able to attend to my head until the doctor and ambulance arrived. The doctor plugged my head wound, and I was taken to Llandudno Cottage Hospital. Just at that time, the finest surgeon in Wales, Mr. Coleman, was at the hospital, and took charge of me; he said if he operated I should die, and if he did not I must die. However, he operated and sewed the brain together. The surgeon thought I was passing on the table and

administered life injections to keep me alive, but no hope was given of my recovery. I was taken to a private ward and all relations sent for, but the Lord's time to take me had not yet come.

I was unconscious for a month and on regaining consciousness for a short time, I felt this was the second mile which I must go. Being blind for a time, I had to be told that I was in hospital. Then, suddenly, the dear Lord came and I simply felt to lie at His dear feet. O the mercy and love I felt lying there—the sweetest spot on earth! I begged of the Lord to let me remain there but, to my great sorrow, I felt the dear Lord withdrawing His sacred presence and “I missed the presence of my Friend, Like one whose comfort's gone.” But, blessed be His holy Name, He gave me that sweet promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be,” which was graciously fulfilled, for I was very ill and no hope of recovery given. The more pain I had, the more strength and help the dear Lord gave me to bear it. Then Satan came with sore temptations and told me that I was not a child of God, so I asked my sister not to let any minister bury me in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection; but the dear Lord broke through the clouds and gave me a little hope in His mercy. I was having life injections in one arm and sleeping injections in the other, to keep me alive, but I again proved that, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”

The kind surgeon said if they wished to take me home, it must be done before the eighteenth week, but he could not say that I should reach home alive, and if they took the risk to move me, he must contact a Leicester surgeon to meet me. On October 13th, 1932, I was taken by ambulance from Llandudno Hospital to my married sister's at Leicester. The ambulance men were afraid they could not get me home alive, but were assured by my friend that special prayer was being made for my safe arrival. I felt very ill, but the dear Lord gave me that sweet promise, “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” O what a support and strength the words were to me! Eventually I went unconscious (which was a great mercy) and remained so until I reached home. The doctor was there to meet and attend to me, and so we had great cause to thank God for a safe journey.

### **Gradual Improvement**

God very graciously gave me a very good and kind surgeon who took a real interest in my case. I was completely paralysed down my left side. The surgeon at Llandudno had written to the Leicester surgeon and told him everything possible had been done for me, and he could only stand by and make me comfortable until I died. Many times did my surgeon say, while watching my brain knit together, “We are fearfully and wonderfully made: I have never known such a miracle.”

Some months after, he took the risk of my life in moving my finger on my left hand, and also slowly moved my left side and got some use in it. I was brought very low spiritually, and could often only say, "Lord help me."

"Pity my simplicity  
Suffer me to come to Thee.

"Fain I would to Thee be brought;  
Gracious God, forbid it not;  
In the kingdom of Thy grace,  
Give a 'wretch like me' a place."

I felt such a wretch, and undone, and begged of the Lord for a word from Himself.

One evening, Mr. H. Haddow, a deacon at Zion, Leicester, came to see me and read a portion of God's word, and prayed that God would give me a word for myself, which the dear Lord graciously did. He sweetly said, "Fear not, I will help thee," and I said, "Lord, a wretch like me?" He kindly said, "Thee." It was such a help and blessing to my soul.

Though I had believed that Christ was the glorious Head of the church, and we were dependent upon Him and the Holy Spirit for every desire and movement Godward yet, lying quite helpless, the doctor having told me that I could not move my little finger unless the brain gave permission, here I was taught more than ever my whole dependence upon God, our glorious Head of the church, for every spiritual desire and for every movement bodily. How I longed to know more of Him whom my soul loved, and how I have proved the truth of that verse many times since!

"No! we bless the Lord on high,  
Not a single joint can die.  
Every member lives in Him.  
He's the life of every limb."

Mr. S. Champion's visits were made a great help to me.

A year after the day of my accident, 23rd August, 1933, I received a notice that the Great Orme Tramway Company, Llandudno, had gone bankrupt. I wondered what I should do, as the old Health Service did not then provide for accidents, only for illness. I was paying privately for doctor and medicine, but the Lord gave me that sweet promise, "God all sufficient," and so I have found Him to be. My doctor was most considerate and kind, and also my late employer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Hicks of blessed memory, who kindly helped me as long as they lived, and since then, their two daughters have done the same. O blessed be God for answering prayer spiritually and in providence!

*(To be continued)*

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### X. Family Prayer

*Here J. C. Philpot answers a threefold question: 1. Is family prayer positively commanded? 2. If a person finds it utterly impossible through family afflictions, should he be exposed to the rebukes of the saints? 3. Do Josh. xxiv. 15 and Jer. x. 25 refer to family worship?*

1. We are not aware of any express text in the New Testament which "positively commands" family prayer. But we gather that it is agreeable to the will of God that His saints should pray in their families from those passages generally in which prayer is spoken of and urged upon the conscience, as Eph. vi. 18; Phil. iv. 6; Col. iv. 2; 1 Thess. v. 17; 1 Tim. ii. 8. Prayer in these passages is spoken of as suitable to all places, times, and circumstances; and thus we have a warrant for bending our knees in our families as included in those times and places. But cases may arise where family prayer is scarcely practicable, not to say impossible. Suppose a gracious woman has an ungodly partner, a drinking, dissipated wretch of a man, who comes nightly staggering home, and, perhaps, treats her with abuse, if not blows. Or suppose the man has an ungodly wife, such a miserable creature of a woman as poor Tanner of Exeter\* was linked to; how, in either of these cases can there be family prayer? These we know are extreme cases, but they show us all the better that family prayer is not a positive institution which must be obeyed under all circumstances. Again, here is a labouring man, or a hard-working mechanic, who must often rise before light to go to his work, leaving his wife and children in bed. How is that man to have family prayer before he sets out for the field or workshop? He may in the evening kneel down with his wife and children, and say a few words to the Lord for himself and them; but even this will be subject to frequent interruptions which he cannot well avoid.

We, ourselves, both advocate and practise family prayer, but we cannot for this reason bind it as a burden on the neck of all heads of families, whatever be their circumstances. The children of God do not serve a hard taskmaster, who exacts a certain amount of service; nor is their God such a one as Papists and Puseyites frame to themselves, who demands a fixed number of prayers at fixed hours, and at fixed length. He is a Spirit, and seeks a spiritual worship and spiritual worshippers; nor is He pleased with family prayers, or any other prayers, that are not prompted by His Spirit. One man may have his family prayers with all due regularity, and his worship be an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. Another may be prevented by unavoidable circumstances from bending his knee with his family and yet be a

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\*Henry Tanner, a godly minister whose memoir was edited by Dr. Hawker

dear child of God; and his secret petitions for his family, though not with his family, be acceptable in His sight.

2. If a person, in spite of all his desires and attempts, cannot attend to family prayer from personal or family afflictions; if he do not make or seek excuses, but is really hindered, and feels the hindrance a burden which he would gladly get rid of, but cannot; and if, after much prayer and supplication to the Lord, the hindrance still remains, we do not see that he should be "exposed to the rebukes of the saints"; nor, indeed, will he be, of those who know the trials and burdens of the way, and especially those family troubles which our correspondent hints at.

3. We cannot apply the Old Testament threatenings, or indeed promises, in all cases to New Testament circumstances. Take, for instance, the declaration of Joshua xxiv. 15, quoted by our correspondent. What New Testament believer can positively declare that "he and his house shall serve the Lord"? If he have, as many Christian parents have, ungodly children, can he undertake for them that they shall serve the Lord as he himself desires to do? He may get, indeed, his grown sons and daughters, or his children of smaller growth, to kneel down with him; but can he make them serve God in newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter? Will family prayer make the daughters love dress less, and keep the sons from serving divers lusts and pleasures? If family prayer could make the whole house serve the Lord, it would indeed be a blessing; but we know that nothing short of the grace of God can do that; and to put family prayer into the place of grace is to dethrone the Lord, and set up an idol.

Nor do we think that the denunciation, Jer. x. 25, is chiefly or wholly applicable to family prayer. The "families" spoken of there are not so much household as nations and tribes, as the word usually means.

And now a word or two on family prayer generally as the subject is thus come before us.

It is a great mistake to make family prayer a burden to a family by drawing it out to an unreasonable length. Some will read a whole chapter containing, perhaps, thirty or forty verses, then pray for a quarter of an hour, till the poor children hate the service altogether. Half a dozen verses, or a short psalm, read slowly and with feeling, and then a short prayer, plain and simple, and just expressing the desires of the soul for the Lord's blessings in providence and grace, with confessions of our sin and unworthiness, and committing all our concerns of body and soul into His sacred hands—what do we want more, when we bow our knees with our wives and children, as they did on the sea-shore at Tyre? (Acts xxi. 5).



## BOOK NOTICES

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**Evidences of the Flood**, by W. W. Greenman; new booklet published by the Gospel Standard Trust; 23 pages; price 15p; obtainable from Mr. O. G. Pearce, 15a Park Avenue South, Harpenden, Herts.

Written by a retired science teacher in Wiltshire, the articles that comprise *Evidences of the Flood* originally appeared in the *Friendly Companion* for 1970.

The author writes from the standpoint of complete confidence in the Bible, and belief in a world-wide flood. He takes the reasonable assumption that if there was such a flood, then evidence of it will remain, and proceeds to show this evidence. Among the evidence brought forward we find: the accounts and traditions of a great flood that have been handed down among nations in all parts of the earth; the countless animal remains, buried in water-laid deposits all over the earth; the rock formations and coal beds; human remains; fossils. Supporting statements of several eminent scientists are quoted. Consideration is given to the claims made by many scientists concerning 'dates' and 'ages' whilst the fraudulence of some of the 'evidence' for evolution is shown.

We hope this booklet will be helpful, interesting and informative to our young people.

**Wycliffe and Huss; Luther; Calvin and Zwingli; Knox**; all by J. R. Broome, B.A.; each 22 to 25 pages; price 15p each; obtainable from Mr. O. G. Pearce.

These booklets are reprints of the lives of the reformers that appeared in 1969 now published with most attractive covers. The four can be obtained bound as a single paperback volume (price 45p) with the cover showing the Reformation Monument at Geneva.

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## OBITUARY

**Enos Hadley**, minister of the gospel, entered into eternal rest on July 31st, 1972, aged 74. He held pastorates at Attleborough (1941-1944), Birmingham (1947-1950), and Lakenheath (1951-1969), retiring through ill health. He was baptized with eight others at Cave Adullam Chapel, Blackheath, on July 6th, 1925, during the pastorate of Mr. F. O. Yates, and elected deacon in December, 1928. He went out to preach in July, 1933. The following is his own account of his call by grace and to the ministry:

"Though born in sin, I was brought up in a Christian home and from my earliest days attended regularly the cause of truth at Cave Adullam, Beeches Road, Blackheath, Birmingham. I remained in a profession until I was 25 years of age, when I was cut down one Sunday morning while in chapel. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, entered with such power into my heart as the minister, Mr. T., was preaching in the absence of our pastor, as he solemnly uttered those words: 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' My eyes were opened and I saw then, as I had never seen before, I was a lost and ruined sinner. O! the effect those words had upon me I could not explain. I was so taken up

and had been for years, with various kinds of sport—especially football, as a player—until I was severely wounded the third time during the 1914-1918 War; and then afterwards, an ardent follower of the sport, which became more to me than anything else in this world. Such a hold it had on me that I would often go without a meal to get to a football match, yet never neglecting the services at chapel. I see the mercy of God in that now, because in chapel that morning, the appointed time had come, ‘not to propose but call by grace.’

“I can best describe the experience that morning in the following words. I had been severely wounded three times (yet mercifully preserved), but I had never received such a wound as when the Holy Ghost sent that word into my heart, ‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon;’ a wound which no earthly physician could heal, and I was lost. O, the indescribable agony that followed! I did cry for mercy; and for months, the 938th hymn (‘When Thou my righteous Judge shalt come’) continued with me, apart from the last verse which I felt I could not enter into. But after much law work, pulling down, stripping and being so humbled before God, I was made to realise :

‘If ever my poor soul be saved,  
’Tis Christ must be the way.’

“It was nearly two years before the Lord appeared and revealed to me the pardon of my sins, and I shall never forget that night! My dear wife was so seriously ill after giving birth to our second boy that it was felt she would not get up again, and for four nights I did not go to bed. But the next night, her mother came and stayed with her. (The railway strike prevented her coming before as she resided at Norton Stourbridge.) During that night I was awakened by those words : ‘I have pardoned thine iniquities.’ I got out of bed as I thought someone in the room had spoken them, so audibly were they spoken. But realising there was no one else in the room, and thinking I had been dreaming, I got into bed again and went to sleep, only to be awakened a second time with the same words : ‘I have pardoned thine iniquities.’ Again I thought it must be a dream, so returned to bed again, yet to be awakened a third time, when such peace and joy filled my soul that I felt I was no longer on this earth. So happy and heavenly was my poor soul that I could not help praising God from whom such a blessing had flowed. Christ was precious then!

“I remained in that peaceful frame for over three weeks, and thought then that I should continue. But alas! I had to learn by painful experience that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom, for it has been a conflict and warfare ever since, and though very painful, yet most profitable—through the deep waters and fiery furnace, yet upheld till now.

“Baptism had not then crossed my mind, but one Sunday morning later, it was brought home to me through a sermon preached from those words: ‘Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?’ Yet I felt I could not go before the church. I was so fearful and could not speak to anyone, let alone before the church. But the Lord was pleased to seal home to my soul the text and sermon by our late pastor: ‘Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’ The *personal application* of those words was so powerful and so sweet—‘*your Father’s* good pleasure to give you the kingdom,’ so I was enabled to go before the church and was baptized with eight more, I being the youngest, in July, 1925, afterwards being received into the church at Blackheath by our late pastor.

“Now, in regard to my call to the ministry, nothing was farther from my thoughts, as such a thing never entered into my mind because I was never one that could speak, and to engage in prayer in public at

the prayer meeting was too much for me. So terrified was I on the first Sunday morning in January, 1930, when the Lord gave me the first intimation that I was to be a minister of the gospel.

"During our pastor's prayer that first Sunday morning, he was led out to ask the Lord to 'raise up yet another' (only one had previously been sent out by the church) 'out of this Sabbath school to go forth and preach Thy truth'—a petition he had never offered up before in his 40 years as pastor; nor did he ever after. But as soon as he uttered those words ('Raise up another out of this Sabbath school') 'Thou art the man' entered with such power into my soul that I was terrified and I was wet through with perspiration, though it was a bitter wintry morning. I remembered nothing more that morning, nor could I lift up my head, so trembling was I, and my desire was to get out as soon as I could. I could only mutter to myself: 'Never, never; not me.' But 'Thou art the man' abode with me all the week. I tried to push it away when going in chapel next Sunday morning, but instead of feeling easier, my trouble increased when our pastor gave out his text, two words: 'Go forward.' O, the agony? 'Thou are the man'; 'Go forward'—which caused rebellion to spring up in my heart. And not only did I tell the Lord I could not, but I would not; and worse than that, I was foolish enough to tell the Lord He had made a mistake. So I fought against it with hand uplifted high. Yet those words continued to follow me day after day, week by week and month by month. I had no rest. And how I did kick against the pricks!

"That continued for nearly three and a half years. I do not think the Lord had a more rebellious child. But I had no rest day or night. The Lord also brought us down to such a state that we knew not where our next meal was coming from. (I would give more details about that but it would take so long.) But being at the ends of the earth in providence and grace, and we having three children then, no one knew of my burden, not even my dear wife. The Lord again revealed His will as He had done so at various intervals. but no yielding from my stubborn heart until He sent His servant with a message from Jonah; and I did fall under that on that particular Sunday because Mr. B. said in his sermon: 'There may be one here who has been commanded by God to go forth and preach His word but who, Jonah-like, will not go.' That broke me down, the first time for nearly three and a half years; so much so that I had to make it known to that minister. He wept, I wept, and he said: 'You must make it known.' But I felt so fearful and trembling that I could not speak until the Lord came again Himself and spoke unto me in such a solemn way that it was as if the Lord said: 'It is the last time; now, therefore, go. I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say.' I had to say to the Lord: 'If Thou goest not with me, carry me not up hence,' when the words came immediately: 'My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest.' The Lord enabled me in broken words to speak to the church."

Here the account ends.

His father, Mr. David Hadley, was spoken to several times regarding the ministry, but the Lord spoke plainly to him, "Thou shalt not build an house for My Name . . . but Solomon thy son." This was not known to his son until after the church had sent him out to preach.

The sudden homecall of his first wife in January, 1951, a few weeks after commencing his pastorate at Lakenheath, was sweetly sanctified. Hymn 132, particularly verse 5, he often spoke about ("And if our dearest comforts fall," etc.), and a telegram, sent to him at this time of bereavement by his father, which read "Jehovah-Jireh." He proved the Lord was faithful in providing another helpmeet in December, 1953. He thanked the Lord frequently, particularly during the closing years of his life, for this provision.

After a brain haemorrhage in 1954, he had an afflicted pathway, although he was enabled to continue in the ministry until December, 1969. All through these years of affliction he was kept submissive to the Lord's will, and would often say, "My times are in His hands." Particularly was this so in 1954 after being told by the doctor that they had only given him six months to live. He also had a blessed meditation on Hezekiah (2 Kings xx) at this time.

The last six years of his life he endured much suffering and weariness, yet frequently said,

"His way was much rougher and darker than mine,  
Did Christ my Lord suffer, and shall I repine?"

Also the verse, "Weary of earth, myself, and sin." He was made ready to be taken home, yet given patience to wait His time.

D.M.H.

*Note by Mr. J. S. Green:*

Our friend was much esteemed by friends at Fenstanton, Studley and Manningford. He was greatly afflicted for some years, the last service he was able to take being the funeral of one he had married and baptized. His visits to the sick and dying were much appreciated by a number at Lakenheath, where many manifested their regard for him at the service on August 3rd. Our friend had chosen the hymns for the funeral service himself, 232 and 483, the latter being sung with much feeling. He was laid to rest at Blackheath. His dear wife was given much patience and help in the long affliction of her dear husband.

**Elsie Faith Boyce**, a gracious member of the church at Galeed, Brighton, died in the Lord on July 25th, 1972, aged 70. She was adorned with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. A few hours before her end she longed for a final token for good, and in a quiet and solemn spirit went through hymn 736 verse by verse with a visitor, giving sober emphasis to verses 3 and 5. In a few hours she received more than a token, and entered into that rest that remains to the people of God.

F.L.G.

**Redvers Crick**, for many years a consistent member of the congregation at Shaw Street, Liverpool, died on May 27th, 1972, aged 71. The burial, taken by Mr. D. T. Evans, was at Knowsley Churchyard.



Though late repentance be seldom true, true repentance is never too late.

*Bagshawe*

Our worship is spiritual when the fire that kindles our affections comes from heaven.

*Charnock*

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# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

## NOVEMBER, 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38, MATT. xxviii. 19

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### PAUL'S FAREWELL

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. O. Pack at the meeting of the Gospel Standard Societies at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester, on Friday evening, 1st September, 1972.*

**Text:** "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. xiii. 11, 14).

There appears something most suitable in this word for this occasion; but we trust there may prove to be something more than that in it, and that the Holy Spirit will be pleased to reveal and apply these precious truths to our souls severally as we have need.

Before we come to the text, we would like, as briefly as possible, to draw a comparison between these two epistles to the Corinthian church, and see how they apply to the church of God to the end of time.

We read in Acts xviii of the divine commission God gave to His servant, the apostle Paul, to preach the gospel in that city: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace . . . for I have much people in this city." And so he might well look for, and expect, that success which eventually did attend his ministry, though he had much opposition to contend with.

If we look back to the first chapter of the first epistle, we find him giving thanks to God for all that He had wrought in these early believers: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a striking commendation of the good things the apostle Paul saw in them, the first-fruits and effects of his faithful ministry! But perhaps what is more striking is that he does not flatter them although he so highly commends the grace of God he perceived in them. He then immediately goes on from that point to rebuke them for many grievous evils which were prevalent amongst them. And all through this first epistle, which I would exhort you prayerfully to read, you will find him rebuking them for one evil after another.

The first evil he rebukes is the setting up of men, making too much of them, even of some of the apostles themselves, and attributing to them the glory which belonged to the Lord alone. Alas!

what strife and division is often caused amongst the Lord's people by this evil! It is a solemn warning to us. Then he rebukes them for carnality, yes, even though he saw much grace in them. He then deals very solemnly with the case of the incestuous person in the church, reproving their neglect of discipline and directing them how to deal with this case. He reproveth them for going to law one with another before unbelievers and for eating things sacrificed unto idols. Then he goes on to reprove men for praying in their assemblies with their heads covered, and women for praying with their heads uncovered. One other grievous thing we must particularly mention and that is the disorderly way they had been keeping the Lord's Supper and the disgrace they had brought on that sacred ordinance by their gluttony and drunkenness. He also reproveth them for disorder and confusion in their assemblies in the use of tongues and in their prophesying; and lastly, in that wonderful fifteenth chapter, where he declares the gospel and sets forth the doctrine of the resurrection, he rebukes those who denied it saying, "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead?"

The general theme then of this first epistle—though he did not lose any opportunity to set forth the gospel—is one of most solemn reproof and *correction*.

We see then, that by God's mercy, he was spared to see the blessed effect of his faithfulness, as he declares here in this second epistle; and in contrast to the first epistle we find this second epistle is, for the most part, one of comfort and consolation. In the first chapter he speaks of comforting these mourning and sorrowful believers with the "comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God"; thus, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." So he goes on to comfort and to apply the healing balm of the gospel to their wounded consciences. Indeed, he rejoices that the first letter to them had the good effect of producing in them godly sorrow unto repentance. "For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?" Yes, the dear apostle now saw the blessed fruits of his faithful rebukes and warnings delivered in his first epistle.

Mind you, there are still some solemn rebukes in this second epistle, and even in this last chapter he refers to some evidently stubborn cases and exhorts them to examine themselves: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Notwithstanding, he concludes this epistle with the good words

in the text: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." And this indeed was his final word to them as to his inspired epistles although he, by the Spirit, uses this word in other epistles, as also does Peter, where it means something more than "now this is my last word." To one's own mind it appears to lay a particular emphasis upon what immediately follows. We find therefore the apostle using this form of speech in other of his epistles, as in Phil. iii. 1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord"; not merely meaning, "This is my last word to you," but, "I cannot say anything greater to you than this, Rejoice in the Lord."

Again, in the fourth chapter of the same epistle we have: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I say the word is used to throw a particular emphasis on the exhortations immediately following.

We find him using the same word again in 2 Thessalonians iii. 1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified" — this is of the utmost importance; I cannot say anything greater. Then we find Peter using the same term in the middle of his first epistle thus: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." So one feels this word is used by the apostles in order to give particular weight and emphasis to the exhortations or truths immediately following.

I have been thinking, too, of this expression in the light of a quotation Mr. Simeon of Cambridge made, at least once, in respect of his preaching. It was this: "As a dying man to dying men, I'd preach as though I'd never preach again." "Finally!"

"Finally, brethren, farewell." Perhaps we do not use this term "farewell" so much as the more common expression "good-bye," meaning "God be with you." But "farewell" has a very full meaning, and how important indeed is every word in the holy Scriptures! What does this then mean: "Farewell"? In the prayer of one of the friends this morning he asked that we might today have meat to eat the world knows not of. That is then to "fare well." It is not merely a "goodbye" or an "adieu," much as those words mean which, I'm afraid, we often forget when we use them; but this word "farewell" is full of meaning in this place.

"Farewell." What is it then for a poor sinner to fare well? It is to feed upon Christ who is the Bread of Life, whose flesh is meat indeed and whose blood is drink indeed. Some of you may say, "That sets up a standard far beyond my experience, for I fear I do not know that for myself." Let us come a little lower then. To fare well is to feed upon the Word of God in any part of it,

not only the promises, but also the encouragements and invitations of the gospel; and also, at times, the rebukes and reproofs of God's holy Word; for "all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable" food for never-dying souls. And, "The written and the Incarnate Word in all things are the same." Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Did he not then fare well? Job said: "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." That is to fare well. Can any of you say as much as this of your own experience? Have you never found comfort and strength in the Word of God? In the experience of His dear saints of old as given in the wonderful book of Psalms, which covers the whole of the experience of God's dear people? Have you never found meat to eat that the world knows nothing of in the words which fell from Christ's sacred lips when here upon earth? What did Peter mean when the multitude went away offended as Christ taught the necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, saying, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you?" The carnal Jews said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" They did not understand the spiritual significance of the words of our Lord Jesus. Turning to His dear disciples He said, "Doth this offend you?" "Will ye also go away?" Peter then said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." The Word of God is spirit and life, and under the application of the Holy Spirit it both gives and maintains the life of God in our souls even as our natural food maintains the life of our bodies. Have you ever felt something of that in your own soul: "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Well, in short, you fare well when you feed upon the truth for to feed upon the truth is to feed upon Christ. "Examine yourselves." Have you an appetite and relish for the Word of God? Does it put joy in your heart when it comes with sweetness and power "more than in the time when their corn and wine increased"? Have you found the words of God to be "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb"? Then you have indeed "tasted that the Lord is gracious."

"Finally, brethren, farewell." To feed then upon the Word of life, to feed upon Christ, is indeed meat to eat that the world knows nothing of. I trust there was just a little taste of this as we left home yesterday. I had been pleading with Him for needed help, telling Him that I was all weakness but He is all strength, and that I was full of sin but that He is full of grace, when the words just quietly came: "Out of weakness were made strong," and I felt strengthened by them.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect." We are not to understand by this sinless perfection; for that we shall never attain to in this life. A child of God does not live in sin. Once the life of God is implanted in his soul he cannot live in sin as

he once did even though he may at times be left to backslide outwardly and though he feels continually to backslide inwardly; but he will find to his sorrow that sin still lives in him. No, we are not to understand this as meaning sinless perfection, but rather as being brought into a state of maturity in the things of God. The apostle Peter has this word: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." And I believe that is what is intended here by the apostle: "Make you perfect." Seek after this spiritual maturity and growth in grace.

I wish to be clear here. The work of the blessed Spirit in the soul from the very beginning is perfect. There can be no imperfection in His work, and even in the cries and sighs, the tears, confessions and longings of a new-born soul, there is a perfection in the blessed Spirit's work. There cannot be any imperfection there; the imperfection is in us and the perfect work of the Spirit is carried on in the midst of a scene of much imperfection.

I have been wondering how we can illustrate this. Consider the case of a new-born babe for as the blessed Spirit uses this figure, we may safely do so too. We might say, a perfect babe; no blemish or deformity and possessed of all its faculties; and yet that babe's faculties of mind and body are undeveloped and immature but, if spared, in time the child will reach maturity and manhood. So it is in the realm of grace. There is perfection in the Spirit's work at every stage—no imperfection there—although there is much to learn, many stages to pass through, and much to suffer and endure before being brought to a state of maturity—"a perfect man" (Eph. iv. 13).

Again the Holy Spirit uses the type of a building to set forth the work of grace. In these days we are quite familiar with the sight of massive buildings being reared up; but what precedes the building? Deep excavations, and for a time you may see nothing but the disturbance of a site. But this work of preparation and the deep excavations for the foundations is, so far as it can be said of man's work, proceeding according to the plan perfectly, and eventually a very wonderful building is completed. And so it is with the work of grace; much to be pulled down and deep foundations dug out, and for a time the work of grace may not be manifest, but the deep digging is all necessary.

Sowing the seed is another familiar figure. In the seed there is life; but what do you see for a time? You do not see the crop brought to perfection at once, do you? So it is in grace: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." "Be perfect."

In other words, I believe it means to seek after maturity in the things of God; to be established in them, as Peter says, by the Holy Ghost: "The God of all grace, after that ye have suffered awhile,

make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." After you have suffered spiritual hunger and thirst; suffered under reproaches and persecution and the fiery darts of the enemy—after all this and many other afflictions besides — "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

"Make you perfect, be of good comfort." There is only one source of true comfort. We sometimes sing:

" Let no false comfort lift us up  
To confidence that's vain;  
Nor let their faith and courage droop,  
For whom the Lamb was slain."

"Be of good comfort." Well, good comfort can only come from the source of all true comfort. The apostle says in the opening chapter of this epistle: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of *all comfort*." Real comfort then can only come from God. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Now, would not that be good comfort to you, fellow-sinner, to know that your iniquity is pardoned; that your daily warfare is accomplished, and that victory will be yours? That is good comfort. You long to know it and feel it; you pray for it continually, that your warfare may come to a victorious end, and that all your sins will be pardoned.

"Be of good comfort, be of one mind." And this brings us to what our dear, aged friend spoke of this afternoon: that unity which exists between the people of God. Peter says: "Finally, be ye all of one mind." There can be no true unity unless we are all of one mind. That is clearly seen in secular things. Unity is strength; disunity is weakness. How then is this to be accomplished? By the teaching of the blessed Spirit; and I thought of this this afternoon when our friend was speaking on this subject. There are diversities of gifts, yet it is the same blessed Spirit; and He does not teach one man one thing, and another something quite contrary to it. If we are taught by the same Spirit, there will be unity, and we shall be of one mind in the things of God. And this should cause us searching of heart where there are disagreements. "Be of one mind." This therefore can only be wrought in us as we are led and taught by the same blessed Spirit.

"Be of one mind, live in peace." It is not easy to live in peace, carrying about as we do a body of sin and death wherein there is the seed of every evil. "Live in peace" with one another. We shall need grace to suffer many unkind things patiently and meekly. We shall have to learn to be reviled and revile not again. In the epistle to the Ephesians the apostle gives the secret of living in peace: "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." There will be much to bear and

forbear with the people of God. "*Endeavouring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And the concluding words of that chapter are: "Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And there will be much that needs forgiveness! God's people are not perfect — not all grace. Whilst here we shall still carry about that old nature, and we shall each need much forgiveness; not only divine forgiveness, but we shall need the forgiveness of those who fear God where we hurt and where we offend. "Forgiving one another." "Live in peace." If you are hurt by your friends, do not seek how you may retaliate, but seek for grace to forgive, grace to bear and forbear, remembering what frail and sinful creatures we are.

"Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." This is not legal, but we are to strive after these things. James says: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Not *for* it—for that would be legalizing the blessings of the gospel—but blessed *in* his deed, the obedience to the precepts and commands of the gospel, the fulfilling of which springs from love. Conversely, if we live at enmity with one another, bearing malice, and are not able to bear and forbear; if we do not forgive one another, how can we hope for the God of love and peace to be with us? "Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

You may say this is setting a very high standard, but Christ has this grace to give and the sad truth is we are so backward to seek it. The Lord would not exhort His people thus to walk if it were impossible to attain to it in this life. He clothes His word with power to the hearts of His dear people and gives them grace to pray for more grace to live according to His word.

And then: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

I'm afraid we get so used to hearing these words in the form of the benediction — perhaps when we are thinking too much of getting out of the chapel — that we hardly hear them, and we lose the significance of these precious words. I used to wonder why the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ came first, but once it came to me in this way: that it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit is known and felt. One of our hymns expresses it like this:

" 'Tis by the merit of Thy death  
The Father smiles again;  
'Tis by Thy interceding breath,  
The Spirit dwells with men."

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Firstly, that grace which is essential to His blessed Person, His humility. Yes, He was a humble Man and He says, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, *and learn of me*; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” What humility! And then His obedience. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. He was meek and lowly of heart; let this grace be with you. Seek to imitate Him, to follow Him and to be conformed to His lowly image, to learn of Him. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He was full of sympathy, of pity and compassion; let this grace be with us.

And then, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as it appertains to Him as the covenant head of His dear people in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, a fulness of grace and truth. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” And later on we read: “And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins.” Yes, He gives the grace of repentance and then He gives forgiveness, and the grace of faith and of hope. Our Jesus is the God of hope as the hymnwriter says:

“ Our Jesus is the God of hope;  
He works it by His power;  
It holds the weak believer up,  
In the distressing hour.”

And every grace He gives.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God.” The apostle here, we feel, alludes particularly to the love of the Father. It is through the grace of Christ the love of God is made known and shed abroad in the heart. The love of God as manifest in the unspeakable gift of His beloved Son. The love of God be with you. You may say, “That is just what I long to know.” “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

“The communion of the Holy Ghost.” It is the blessed Spirit that takes of the things of Jesus and reveals and applies them to the hearts of poor sinners. O, how we slight this blessed Person and grieve and vex the Holy Spirit! And yet how dependent we are upon Him for all right knowledge and teaching! “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” How necessary then is this communion of the Holy Ghost as He communicates the things of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus to our poor souls! In the epistle to the Romans we read: “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts

by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It is only by the teaching of the blessed Spirit we can know and enjoy anything savingly of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Simple truth that! We know that even those who are nearest and dearest to us in the ties of nature do not know, cannot know, what is going on in our hearts. "But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."

O, how this Scripture blessedly unites the Trinity in the work of salvation! In the accomplishment of the work of grace in a poor sinner's heart! How necessary is the communion of the Holy Ghost! Now whilst we may rightly speak of the grace of God the Father and the grace of the Holy Spirit; and of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit; yes, we may indeed speak of these blessings as proceeding from each of the Persons in the blessed Trinity as the Scripture does; yet, one feels, these are the three particular graces by which the glorious Trinity is characterised in the church of God and in the holy Scriptures: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

May the Lord bless the word to us and fulfil it in some gracious measure in our experience.

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## THE GOSPEL STANDARD SOCIETIES

*Report of the Meetings held on Friday, 1st September, 1972,  
at Rochdale Road Chapel, Manchester.*

### **Morning Prayer Meeting**

After the singing of Hymn 1002, Mr. J. E. Field, conducting the Meeting, read Ephesians vi, and spoke as follows:

There is nothing that can ever compare to the unerring, searching Word of God. It speaks to children; it speaks to the hoary head; it speaks to servants; it speaks to masters; it speaks to those in authority; it speaks to the royal head; it speaks to the beggar upon the dunghill. And it is by this searching Word of God that you and I will be judged. How solemn! And we have the solemn exhortation that speaks to all, whether young or old: "Search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." And it is unique. We do not need a new Bible because the Word of God is ever new. It is as new and as fresh as the dawning light. How wonderful indeed it is!

The words that I have on my mind, which were laid upon me in the night, I believe, were these: "Praying always."

Prayer is the first evidence of the life of God in the soul of a sinner. He prays. He prays not where the eye of man can see him, but in secret before God. And I am persuaded of this, he comes in secret before His Maker, solemnly conscious that the eye of God is upon him. And that prayer is a prayer for mercy. The life of God begins thus in its manifestation in the heart of a sinner with prayer for mercy. It is true what dear Mr. Hart has expressed: "Begging mercy every hour." And that is down to our dying moments. The life of God then, in its manifestation, begins with prayer and ends with prayer. The poet says:

"His watchword at the gate of death,  
He enters heaven with prayer."

Do we pray? When prayer commences with us, it is our own solemn concern. As the sinner grows in grace through the work of the Holy Ghost, he begins to pray for others. He begins to pray for those that weigh heavily upon him. O, what a blessed people are those that pray! Praying hearers; praying ministers; those that cannot live without prayer; those that have to come before God continually day and night! But, my dear friends, how it is neglected! How we neglect it! "Praying always," is the exhortation here. O, that we might be more in prayer, for,

"Were half the breath thus vainly spent,  
To heaven in supplication sent,  
Your cheerful song would oftener be,  
'Hear what the Lord has done for me.'"

And there is much to pray for. First, in our own solemn state and condition. How I feel to come far behind those that have gone before! And yet how the exhortation in the Hebrews speaks to us, and O, how we need much grace to be followers of those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises"!

And, my dear friends, there is a need of prayer for the church of God in her low estate. "Praying always" for the church of the living God; praying for a godly increase. How we need to see it! O, that we could see it in our dear young friends! We know that there are some, but we desire to see more. We desire to see a building up of the kingdom of God; those that have been wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, brought to know their own great need, for these are the ones that will continue, the ones that will praise Him. For where there is real prayer, there is, in time, praise. "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed."

And prayer for the nation. At what time in the history of our nation has this country been in such a desperate state and condition? And how we should bear up our nation before the Lord and pray for the nation! Who can tell? For we read in Ecclesi-

astes that there was a poor wise man who was found in a little city, and there came a great king against it with his army, and this man by his wisdom delivered the city. And in James we read that "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." Effectual fervent prayer prevails when every other method fails.

My desire is — and I know it is the desire of some here— that the Lord would pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplication in our assembly here today. The minister needs the prayer of the people, and a true minister of the sanctuary is concerned about the state of his flock; he prays for them day and night. Who knows the wrestling in prayer of the servant of God for those he labours amongst? And so the Lord, in His rich mercy, grant us real prayer. This is the only weapon that God has put in the hand of sinners—and we are sinners. What a mercy, then, if you and I pray! It was said of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth." And that does not speak of him alone; Scripture is of no private interpretation; it speaks to you and to me. How did our beginning commence? Did it commence with prayer? If it did, then we are still praying and we shall still pray while life and breath remain.

The Lord bless these few poor remarks.

Mr. Field then called upon Mr. P. T. Gudgeon (Nuneaton) to pray, followed by Mr. B. Walshaw (Bradford) and Mr. O. G. Pearce (Luton), after which Hymn 395 was sung. After this, Mr. B. J. Lockey (Westoning) prayed, followed by Mr. J. A. Hart (Brighton) and Mr. W. Cockett (Manchester). The Meeting concluded with the singing of Hymn 882 and prayer.

### Afternoon Meeting

After the singing of Hymn 517, the Chairman (Mr. J. T. Pollington) read Psalms 29 and 33 and then called upon Mr. P. M. Rowell (Coventry) to pray.

Hymn 88 (omitting verses 5 and 6) was then sung, and the Chairman addressed the Meeting as follows:

Dear Friends, Mr. Field spoke this morning of God's searching and unerring word. He also spoke of his great concern for our young people who are growing up in an evil world. This somewhat confirmed me that, in making a few remarks from the chair, I should try to address our younger friends particularly. I can indeed join with our dear friend in expressing my concern for their welfare in these evil days. Our friend, Mr. Rowell, also prayed for them just now. And how much they need our prayers today—more than they ever did, if we can put it that way!

In the Psalm that we read (Psalm xxxiii) the psalmist evidently

refers to the work of creation as recorded by Moses in the book of Genesis. In the 6th verse he says: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made"; and in the 9th verse: "For He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings, but it is a book which has been the subject of many attacks, not only by atheists, infidels and evolutionists, but by those who profess to be religious leaders. They reject the greater part of Genesis and relegate it to the regions of legend and myth. My dear young friends, it is very damaging and soul-destroying to receive such teaching. We believe and are sure that the account of creation as recorded by Moses is indeed the Word of God.

The Psalmist often mentions the wonders of God's creation. In Psalm xix he says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." I believe that he had Moses' writings before him in his own language in much the same way as we have today in our language. The first chapter of Genesis gives such a simple yet majestic description of the creation of the earth. We read in Psalm xxix just now that the "voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

In Genesis i the three words, "And God said," are repeated eight times. To me there is a great depth in those words. "*And God said.*" The human mind cannot plumb the depths of those words; infinity is in them—everything about God is infinite. The human mind cannot receive it, cannot understand it; but we receive it by faith in the Lord Jesus.

In Genesis i we are told of the beginnings of this earth: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Then we are told how all things upon the earth were created — all things in the earth and around the earth, sun, moon and stars. We are told in simple, clear language that God created all these things. In Psalm xxxiii. 6, we have these words: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." Now, we accept this word "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God," and though it may be rejected by scientists, we would take heed to the exhortation of Paul to Timothy to "avoid the oppositions of science falsely so called."

Then, in Genesis ii, we are given more details concerning the creation of man upon the earth and the very important point that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This gives the lie to the dreadful theory abroad today that man has evolved from animals: "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a *living* soul." We should never forget that. The soul of man must live for ever, either in heaven or in hell. Dear young friends, may you have grace to seek to the Lord that you may be taught that great salvation which is brought before us in Genesis iii.

There are two more important things in Genesis ii. We have the institution of the Sabbath day. This institution of God has the same weight and authority today as it had in the day the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to write: "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

The other institution given to man before the Fall was marriage. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." This institution is with us today.

The third chapter deals with the awful and solemn event when Satan entered the garden; sin entered and man fell from his state of perfection. How solemn is the consideration of this truth! No-one can really fathom the awful depth of sin, yet today the fall of man is almost universally rejected and many have the mistaken belief that man is gradually progressing to some state of perfection. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dr. Milner in his *Evolution and the Bible\** said, "Adam was no savage; he was upright and noble, unlike ourselves . . . Any remains that we find are those of men showing the degenerating effects of sin after the Fall but are not the remains of primitive men in the evolutionary sense of the word."

Here we see the beginning of sin, and who can know the end of it? Not only do we see the beginning of sin but we see the beginning of salvation. Salvation was first proclaimed to guilty man when God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Salvation to sinful, guilty man through the blood of the Lamb was preached in the Garden of Eden. That is another beginning.

Then we read in Genesis iv of the first murder—the awful fruit of sin. And as we go on further we see that the Word tells us: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth." Twice we are told that the earth was filled with violence, and we wonder sometimes how the dreadful days in which we live compare with those before the Flood. God saw the earth was full of violence and He brought the solemn punishment of the Flood upon the earth, when only Noah found grace in His sight.

Going back for a few minutes to chapters iv and v, we are given the descendants of Cain to the seventh, Lamech, and his sons. Lamech was a murderer, and here we have the first mention of polygamy. Compare Cain's descendants with those of Seth. Enoch was the seventh from Adam in Seth's line, and we read of him that he was "translated that he should not see death." We are given the line of Seth down to Noah and it would appear that

\* See G.S. 1971, page 349.

those named were all men who feared God; but it came down to one only, Noah.

When we compare those days with our own, it is encouraging to know that there is still a godly remnant in the world who really fear the Lord, who know His grace, who have received salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

There are two more "beginnings" after the Flood. One is the Lord's promise (of which we see the fulfilment every day of our lives) that, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Another proof of God's faithfulness to His word is His promise to Noah that He would no more send judgment on the earth by a universal flood.

Further on in chapter xi is the description of how the people attempted to build a tower whose top should reach to heaven, and we read that God came down and confounded their language. Here is the beginning of the diversity of language throughout the world.

These are proofs, if proofs are needed, of the reality and truth of God's Word.

The early chapters of Genesis might well be called a revelation to Moses of events he knew little about. Later on he wrote (still under the direction of the Holy Spirit) of events of which he had personal knowledge. But the account of creation was a special revelation by the Holy Spirit in revealing events from the beginning of the world.

We reject the soul-destroying doctrine of evolution and all those theories which deny the Word of God and which put the Word of God in the category of myth or legend. We firmly reject all these theories and desire that our young friends may be given grace to reject any teaching contrary to the Word of God. Only the grace of God, my dear young friends, can preserve you from drinking in the evils which abound today, and my desire for you is this: "That the very God of peace may sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. v. 23).

The Chairman then asked Mr. Dickinson (Secretary) to read the report of the Aid and Poor Relief Societies.

#### **REPORT OF THE AID AND POOR RELIEF SOCIETIES**

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

May I, on behalf of the Committee, express our sincere thanks to the friends here for the use of their chapel for our Meetings today.

As you appreciate, this Report is a resumé of the progress of the Societies during the first eight months of the year and must necessarily be brief.

We are pleased to inform you that the income of the Aid Society has far exceeded our expectation, £16,745 having been received up to a week ago. Although we are very grateful for this encouraging amount, we are solemnly reminded of death, as £13,000 was by way of legacies. However,

your Committee has been confirmed in the increase made to the grants earlier in the year so that each of our 32 recipients receive £2 weekly. We have invested a large proportion of these legacies in order to increase the investment income with a view to a possible further increase in the grants at a future date. At this point, I would reply to criticism which is often made of the large capital of the Societies. This capital is invested to ensure that a steady income is received from the investments; otherwise, it would be impossible to maintain such acceptable pensions, and to make grants to Causes in need of financial assistance. The expenditure in grants alone from the Aid Society for the year is expected to be in the region of £3,400 and the income from subscriptions and collections will only amount to approximately £2,000, so it is necessary to keep a substantial capital invested.

A review of the grants made from the Poor Relief Society has been completed and your Committee has decided that the gross weekly income of single persons should not be less than £9, and that of married persons, £10. As a result, the grants made this year will be in the region of £4,500 as compared with £2,100 last year. Income to the end of August totalled £6,062, a large proportion of which came from investments.

Mention is seldom made of the Magazine Free Distribution Fund from which copies of the magazines are sent free to those who cannot afford to purchase their own, or to the churches which they attend that cannot afford to purchase the magazines for them.

Last year, the cost to the Magazines was £315, and if we are to continue this distribution, donations are urgently needed to this Fund as the balance in hand at the present time is only £100. We are not permitted to subsidise the printing costs of the Magazines from any of the charitable funds and consequently, any discrepancy has to be reflected in the price of the Magazines. We would earnestly solicit our young friends to purchase their own magazines and thus increase the circulation. Our Editors continue to need your prayers if their labours are to be of profit to the souls of the readers.

In conclusion, we desire to acknowledge the Lord's continued help in enabling us to alleviate the needs of our poorer brethren and sisters and to thank all friends who have contributed so liberally to these worthy Societies. May the Lord bless all associated with us and return with power to the churches.

**CHAIRMAN:** The need in these days for a substantial amount of investment capital cannot be too heavily emphasized. When we receive legacies from deceased friends it means that we have lost subscribers, and if our grants are to keep pace with the rapid rise in the cost of living, we must have a considerable income. Income from subscriptions would not be sufficient to enable us to give substantial help to the poor of our churches. The Lord has maintained us for a hundred years and I trust He will continue to maintain our Societies. The Poor Relief Society is able to give help to places of worship where considerable expenditure is needed for repairs, and we all know the high cost of repairs to buildings today.

Mr. J. A. Watts (Bethesda Fund Secretary) was then asked to read his report.

#### **BETHESDA FUND REPORT**

Once again it is the duty and privilege of the Bethesda Fund Committee to record the faithfulness of the Lord in the maintenance of the Bethesda Homes throughout another year. In many parts of the Scriptures — particularly in the Psalms — we read of the

faithfulness of God in providential as well as spiritual matters, and on one occasion (1 Chron. xvi. 4), David appointed certain men for the express purpose "to record and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel." This is the main theme of the Bethesda Report this year because, despite many difficulties and much labour, the Lord has brought us safely through and has provided for all our needs in a remarkable way.

Since the Meeting last year, the new Home at Hove has been opened and is now filled with its full complement of 22 residents. The atmosphere in the Home is good and the presence of the Lord has been known and felt in a marked way. In fact, it is true to say that the pleasing atmosphere which prevails in all the Homes has been the most outstanding point to which attention has been drawn during the past year. Many friends who have visited the Homes have testified to this in their letters and have expressed their prayerful hopes that this will be long continued.

During the first half of 1972, the Committee was faced with an unusual number of complex problems. Mercifully, most of these have now been resolved, although in running six Homes with nearly 100 elderly residents, it is inevitable that fresh difficulties will continue to arise. So far as finance is concerned, it is significant that since the July Committee Meeting, when many heavy items of expenditure were discussed, legacies of over £7,000 have been received for the General Fund. We are thankful to the Lord for this remarkable provision.

During the past three months, there have been more new applications than usual for residence in the Homes, and there are now 47 names on the Waiting List. The six Homes are still full, but we have been pleased to provide temporary accommodation again this year for a few friends whilst relatives have taken a much-needed rest. To illustrate how much this temporary accommodation is appreciated, I will read an extract from a letter received a few weeks ago:

"I have just returned from my month's stay at the Bethesda Home and would like you to know how much I have enjoyed it. The Home is so lovely, as I expect you know, the food excellent and the company good. I did so enjoy the good atmosphere and the readings, etc. . . . It was all very nice and I felt it a great favour to be there. Now I am back home again with my dear ones, rested and refreshed. How good the dear Lord is, thus to provide for His aged ones!"

Before concluding this report, we wish to pay particular tribute to the untiring work of the secretaries of the six Home Committees. Few people realise the burdens of administration which continually rest upon their shoulders in dealing with the day-to-day running of the Homes, and the thanks of the denomination are due to them for their labour of love. We thank also the matrons and staff for their devoted services during another year.

We are reminded by this annual meeting, that since we last met, we have lost the services of our late dear friend, Mr. H. W. Jones, who was such a valuable member of the Bethesda Fund Committee and of the Haydock Home Committee. We are thankful, however, for new Committee members, and we pray that the Lord will abundantly bless each one engaged in any part of the work connected with the Homes.

Yours to serve,  
The Bethesda Fund Committee.

**CHAIRMAN:** You will all be well acquainted with the work of the Bethesda Fund so there is no need for me to enlarge on the Report. Those of you in business will realise the many problems which continually come up in the management of any institution.

As our Secretary said, there are six Homes with nearly 100 residents in all, and problems do arise. The Lord has helped thus far and we would, with Paul, "thank God and take courage."

As regards the Societies and the Bethesda Homes, I would like to say that the Lord has provided us with two very competent secretaries. This is a great blessing and help to us.

Mr. Legh Banfield then read the Report of the Gospel Standard Library.

#### LIBRARY REPORT

Looking back over the twelve months which have elapsed since making the last report it is gratifying to find there has been an expansion both in the number of books borrowed and also in the acquisition of others.

A new Supplementary Catalogue has now been completed and will be available early in October. It is hoped this will result in a still further interest in this work.

We wish heartily to thank all friends who have contributed by gifts of books and donations and thus helped to keep the Library functioning usefully.

It is a matter for thankfulness that the financial position is sound, and income has been in excess of expenditure. Grateful thanks are given to our Chairman and Editors for wise counsel and help given.

We would seek in this work to do all things as unto the Lord, feeling much insufficiency, yet hoping the labour may not be altogether in vain.

**CHAIRMAN:** I would just like to mention that any friends wishing to visit the Library should write to Mr. Banfield, the Librarian, who will be pleased to meet them and show them round.

One other item is the Gospel Standard Trust. Quite a lot of work goes on behind the scenes in connection with trusteeships. The Secretary is always willing to help churches and trustees. The Trust is able to accept co-trusteeships of chapels and premises. Also, considerable help is given where there are development schemes by local authorities affecting our chapels. Much work has been done for Brixton where the local authority has made a Compulsory Purchase Order on the chapel. The Secretary will always be pleased to give help and advice on any such points, and I invite churches to write to him.

The other side of the Trust is Publications. You will be well acquainted with the publications listed month by month on the cover of the *Gospel Standard*. Mr. Pearce, who is with us today, has a new Publications and Price List, which also shows the books it is hoped to publish this year and early next year. The list also includes an order form.

Mr. J. Delves then addressed the meeting.

**MR. DELVES:** Mr. Chairman and dear friends, I have felt some hesitancy in relation to coming today, but I have ventured to come, and I desire, as may be helped, to speak a few words to you this afternoon, which will probably be my last occasion. The word that has been upon my mind is in Psalm cxxxiii, particularly the first

verse: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It is, I feel, to some point with this in view in our minds that we assemble together here today, though the desire is to strengthen the bond between our dear friends in the Northern part of England and those of us in the Southern part. Although these are very, very sad days, yet we have cause to be thankful to the Lord for His mercy in thus far maintaining our denominational status. And although many causes of truth are very low, yet, through mercy, we have been brought thus far.

I have been thinking of late about this unity that we have in this precious Psalm. Actually, the word is only mentioned three times in the Scriptures. But it has a very far-reaching implication. It has a deeper import than merely a union. The union that is felt in the hearts of the Lord's dear people who are of one mind and heart is based on this "unity." There cannot be any *real* union apart from this "unity." The *unity* is like to the foundation, and the *union* as standing *upon* that foundation and being united to it. I understand that the expression "unity" really means "the state of being one." That is what unity really indicates, and as I may be helped, I desire to bring two or three points to light where this unity is a most blessed reality, and where it is, in some cases, a *perfect* unity.

In the first place here then, I would refer you to *the Being and subsistence of God*. There is a unity there that surpasses all other. It is a unity subsisting in the Persons of the glorious eternal Trinity. We have this mentioned in 1 John v where the apostle John says: "For there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these Three are One." The Word means the Son (a Jewish phrase), the eternal Son of God; the Word, in this sense, that through Him the Father speaks. We have it in John i. 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now here is a unity, a *perfect* unity that can never be affected by all the changing conditions of time. This is an everlasting, eternal unity in relation to the glorious Trinity, perfect in equal fulness in each divine Person. It may be some of you here have had a moment in your life when the Trinity has shone before your eyes in the sweet view of faith. If I am not deceived, I hope I have known something of this which has endeared the glorious Trinity to *my* soul. It is a doctrine, I know, that has often been attacked, but all attacks or attempts to overturn it are to no ultimate purpose whatever. It is the vital doctrine of the eternal Person of the Son of God that we hold so dear in our denominational standing. In this aspect, it is very, very sweet to feel in the heart some sacred view of these three glorious Persons as one eternal God; the Godhead shining forth in all its heavenly lustre, beauty and glory in each divine Person. And in one particular aspect, as it is seen in the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I hope this will be some-

thing more than a letter truth to us. I hope that sometimes there is, and will be, some sweet revelation of it in our souls. That will do more for us than reading about it, although it is good to read.

Here then is a *perfect* unity that surpasses the comprehension of our poor finite minds, but it is a glorious revelation of heaven.

But there is another unity that is very blessed, and that is *the unity that subsists between the Lord Jesus Christ and His church*. That is to say, in the sense referred to by the apostle in the Ephesians concerning the church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Here is another very blessed unity from which nothing can separate. This unity is actually, as it were, a bonding together in the love of Christ from which nothing can separate (Rom. viii. 38, 39). The church, in the sense I have referred to it as the body of Christ, incorporates the whole elect of God through the ages of time from the first to the last member of His mystical body. They are gathered, and will be, as we read, from east, west, north and south (Psa. cvii. 3), every one of them united in a covenant bond that neither death nor hell can break. They were eternally chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; every one of them is enrolled in this blessed covenant of grace, of which we read in Hebrews viii. 10-12, and in the divine purposes of God they stand in union with Christ and are, in that union, from condemnation free. What union then can be more blessed than this? As the apostle Paul affirms: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Blessed standing indeed is this! They are in Him as His body, of which He Himself is the glorious Head. Here then is a unity that is based upon the eternal love of God to His people. All of them are lost and ruined in the Fall, and in the Lord's time are brought to feel it, to be convinced of their lost condition, to realise the peril they are in, and to have to cry for mercy, like the poor publican when he said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Here then is a sweet, blessed unity, a unity that will stand until the whole elect of God are numerically complete in Christ as to their persons. It may be, and sometimes I feel it will be, not so very far ahead before the Lord will come again the second time to gather those whom He has redeemed and who are looking for Him, as we read: "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." And now, as I have come to the evening of my life, I feel increasingly concerned about this point, whether *I* am incorporated in this unity. I know they are all perfectly safe there, they are secure, eternally secure, as sure of heaven as though they were already there. But even so, it is a personal question:

"When Thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come  
To take Thy ransomed people home,  
Shall *I* amongst them stand?"

There is also another unity that can be referred to in relation to

the Lord's dear people, and that is *a unity of doctrine*. By doctrine here, I understand the vital foundation truths of the everlasting gospel. There is a unity here with those who know and love the same precious truths in their measure, and who feel to have had some manifestation of them to their souls. This can refer to the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the work that He accomplished by taking our nature upon Himself, fulfilling all that was committed to Him by His perfect, active obedience to the divine law under which we in ourselves stand condemned, and the precious atonement that He made when He laid down His precious life, shed His blood, paid the ransom price to deliver His poor, law-bound, condemned captives, by fulfilling the law for them. And not only fulfilling it *for* them but suffering the terrible penalty as though He had broken it Himself. We read of Him in 2 Corinthians that "He was made sin." I do not know how this may occupy your minds in the silent watches of the night, but sometimes it occupies my mind, and at times I see a glory in the blessed doctrine of the perfection of His obedience to the law, and the satisfaction rendered by His substitution when He appeased offended Justice, was smitten by its sword (Zech. xiii. 7), and when He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This profoundly blessed doctrine as it centres in the glorious Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ must be the foundation of our unity if we are the redeemed of the Lord. We must all be saved through the same glorious Person, and we must all be washed in the same precious sin-atonement blood, and we must all be justified by the same perfect robe of righteousness; the same Jesus, now a living Jesus who rose again from the dead and ascended up into heaven, "clothed in a body like our own," wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him.

This then is a unity in doctrine forming a union one to another built upon that unity when and where we are of the same mind, and can flow together to the goodness of the Lord in the precious gospel.

It is true that there are other points of doctrine that might be mentioned and incorporated, but I have just referred to those main, vital things. And, perhaps here, I might, as our dear Chairman has referred to our young people, mention a word or two that may interest them. Whether young or old, each one needs the same Saviour and the same vital realities. It is not good merely to indulge them with something pleasing to the flesh; vital realities are necessary for our salvation, and very solemn they are, too. Actually we cannot consider our young friends in any better way than to bear them before the Lord, and to seek for them that they may be brought to feel the necessity of *real* things in salvation, for we all, whatever age, have an immortal soul. How sweet sometimes it has been when young people have been called to die in early years, who have witnessed a good confession and have borne evidence of their knowledge of the precious gospel! These are very

solemn times for our young people. We tremble for them and we desire to do all that may be right and proper for their spiritual good. But when it comes to the tremendous issues of eternity, we must come to this: "Give me Christ or else I die."

There is another point in regard to this unity, and that is in relation to *the teaching of the Holy Spirit*. Is there not a blessed unity here? It is said in Isaiah: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." So there must be a unity in divine teaching. When the Lord was upon earth, as you know, He frequently referred to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, saying, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." There is a precious unity in that teaching. *I am sure there is*. It will not be a matter of simply saying "I believe this or that," and another saying, "I do not believe," but "They shall all be taught of the Lord" (Isa. liv. 13). This will not incorporate all who may call themselves Christians, but it *will* incorporate every vessel of mercy who is taught of the Lord, as all His dear children will be. And there is something very, very sweet about this unity, or union that flows out of the unity.

When I was quite a lad and was brought into some concern about my soul, I could not at that time open my mind to my father or mother about things that I felt, although I did eventually to my mother. But before that, we had a friend who came to visit our home, and on one occasion when he left, I went part of the way with him, and on the way he, in a very affectionate manner, began to "draw me out," and I felt my heart opened to tell him all I felt. I shall never forget the kind way in which he spoke to me. I felt such a love to him; I had not felt the same before. This is what I mean. Where the teaching is real, there will be a flowing together to the goodness of the Lord, and there may be some young people here perhaps (I do not know) who might feel that they could not speak their mind to anyone about their exercises, especially to their parents; but the day will come when it will "burn itself out," and then there will be a sweet flowing from heart to heart.

This especially is felt on some occasions, when one or another comes before the church. I remember a particular case at Brighton, when a friend came before the church, and her testimony was so sweet to me that it left a savour on my spirit for days after; and when I saw her a week or two ago, I reminded her and she said, "Yes, I remember it so well." She was helped to speak with such a softened heart, under a sense of the goodness of the Lord, and it came out of her heart into my heart. This is the sweetest flowing together that we can have.

There is another point here where this unity is felt, and that is in relation to *prayer*. Sometimes — we could not always say the same — but sometimes at a prayer meeting there is a sacred influence felt in the prayers in the felt unction of the Spirit of the Lord in them. A short time ago I felt this in a

particular way at a prayer meeting in my own place. But it is not always the same, as I have said. Sometimes a prayer meeting can be very much otherwise, but there are occasions when there is a gracious unction in the prayers that softens the heart and there is sweet union.

Soon after I began to preach, I made an engagement at a place in Bedfordshire. I had never been the other side of London before, and it was snowing when I left home. Eventually, I got to the station where the good man met me, but did not say anything. After we got to his house and had some supper, he read and prayed and the dear, good man prayed into my heart. I felt quite softened in my spirit. I have never forgotten it. It commenced a union of heart with that good man. He has long since gone to heaven. This is what I really mean when I say a union or unity in prayer; it is not necessarily always at the prayer meeting. It is wonderful what an influence this can have on the minds of others. And here again, our young people are on my mind, for whose benefit particularly I relate these circumstances.

When I first went to Brighton in 1908, I found myself involved in temptations of all kinds—theatres, and all sorts of things. And once, I did go to a theatre because I thought the play was something which might qualify my going—although that was very wrong of me; but that was the only time. Often when I was tempted to certain evils, my dear father's prayers would come up before me, and I remembered how every day he would go down on his knees and pray for his boys. These prayers were remarkably impressed upon my spirit, through the Lord's mercy, and when the time came that I was brought into a deeper concern about my soul, those temptations faded; and I used to go to Galeed wondering if there could be anything for a poor, wretched sinner like me. There is something remarkable about prayer. It can move the Majesty of heaven to regard a poor sinner. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

I had a godly old friend in Brighton who told me a little of his early days. He said he was on one occasion going over Redhill Common to the prayer meeting in such distress of mind that he said he could not possibly pray, and he resolved to tell the deacon not to call on him. But when he got to the chapel, another poor burdened man was asking the deacon not to call upon him. "I cannot pray," he said. "Very well," said the deacon, "very well." And when the prayer meeting started, the deacon called on the first man who said he could not pray; but he stood up and had such liberty in prayer that both were delivered, and a sweet union was felt between them. There is a wonderful power in prayer! I have ventured to mention these circumstances to clarify my point, and hoping they may be of some interest to our young friends.

There is also *a union of spirit in the Lord's providential deal-*

*ings with us.* In the Scriptures we read of them—Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, David, and many others. Sometimes there has been a sweet union felt when the Lord's providential dealings have been recorded one to another. It has sometimes been the means of sweet communion because providence and grace are blended together, although providence is not grace. But the Lord does blend them together; the trials, tribulations, bereavements and afflictions of the Lord's people, to which they are more or less liable and have to experience, do unite them together. In one sense, nothing is more uniting than when there is sweet communion from one to another in times of trouble, affliction and distress.

Just for a moment before I close, I want to refer you to another *perfect* unity. I know there is much imperfection in us all while we are down here, but there is a unity *in heaven* (of which we read in the Revelation) of the angels, elders and living creatures, that their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands all uniting in the same song: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." What a blessed unity! And does not this link itself with the unity that I first mentioned in relation to the blessed Trinity? Here is a perfect unity among those that are safely garnered; they are now enjoying this perfect unity. There will be no sin there, never will be; there never will be any breach in that blessed unity.

I could refer to our *denominational unity* which is very necessary to unite us together upon the same principles of truth and Articles of Faith which we hold and believe, that constitute us as Gospel Standard Baptists, a distinctive body.

May the Lord be pleased to bring in others amongst us, who in their heart desire to be with us. But if not, then may we be enabled to hold fast that which we have already; and may we be of those who will eventually "join in that everlasting song And crown Him Lord of all." Amen.

Hymn 834 was then sung and the Chairman concluded the Meeting with prayer.

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### HITHERTO

*The Experience of Miss Ruth Beesley*  
(Continued from page 314)

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#### More Trials and Mercies

I felt full of earthly concerns and had to pray, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name." Then came the word with divine power into my soul: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Then I was enabled to thank the Lord for the home that He would provide. That evening my dear sister was at Zion and a friend, Miss L. Robinson, whom I did not know at that time, en-

quired how I was, and she told Miss Robinson I was needing another home. Miss R. went home and told her sister and they decided to come and see me, Miss R. having had the word applied to her, "Take this child and nurse it for Me." They kindly offered to take me, but I should have to be upstairs for some time. I went to Miss Robinson and her sister in November, 1934, and was with them a good number of years.

At that time my doctor was teaching me to pull myself up from a chair by the bed rail and then stand alone for a minute with his arms each side of me. This took me four months to do, and then I was taken ill with appendicitis and there was also an abscess. I was taken to hospital for an operation; I was also on the verge of peritonitis and very ill. The surgeons dare not operate because of the serious brain operation, but did their utmost and dispersed the abscess and sent me home, as they could not do any more, but the dear Lord graciously helped me through.

On one occasion I needed ten shillings more to pay my board which was due that morning and I was just reading that precious promise, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," and had my finger on that very text, when the postman brought me a letter containing a ten shilling note.

"For the wonders He has wrought,  
Let us now our praises give;  
And, by sweet experience taught,  
Call upon Him while we live."

On account of the Tramway Company going bankrupt, it was three years before my compensation case was settled, and then the compensation was so small, I wondered what I should do if I lived. I broke down thinking of the struggle ahead when, instantly, I felt surrounded with the Lord's presence and He spoke the words to me, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." I felt to be on holy ground and said, "Dear Lord, I never shall," and, bless His holy Name, I never have.

The fifth anniversary of the accident I had a special time. The Lord gave me those words: "Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps," and I was led back to the blessed waymarks the dear Lord had given me. The seventh anniversary, I woke up very early with the words: "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His Name together." I longed for someone to come so that we could exalt His Name together. I was put down for my usual afternoon's rest but I could not rest; I wanted to praise the Lord for His mercy and care. At that moment dear Mr. S. Champion came and so we tried to exalt His blessed Name together.

### **Chapel after Nine Years**

I was not able to go to chapel for over nine years; my heart did thirst for the courts of the Lord. At length, through mercy, I was enabled to be taken by car to Zion Chapel. The friend I lived

with wished me to ask my kind doctor's permission which, to satisfy her, I did. Doctor said, "You will go prepared to be very ill, won't you?" I replied, "No, doctor, I hope to enjoy the service." I said, "You took the risk of my life in moving my fingers and the Lord helped us." Doctor said, "Yes, He did; He always helps you. Your faith will bring you through. I'll give my consent." So I was carried to the car by my dear nephew and laid on a bed in the chapel and we had a real thanksgiving service. Early that Sabbath morning I felt very ill, yet I felt sure the Lord would take me to His house, and the Lord gave me that sweet promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness," and the Lord gave me a refreshing sleep. I did not even feel ill during that service and when I got back to bed, the words came with divine power, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

My arms being very weak I hardly knew how to use them and I asked the Lord to help me and He gave me that portion, "The arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." Thus the dear Lord strengthened my arms. The worst head attack I ever had was one midnight. I could not move or speak and was alone, yet not alone, for the Lord came with the words, "His left hand is under my head." It was as though Jesus stood by me supporting my head. Then He spoke these sweet words to me, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Words fail to tell the inward peace He gave me. We must go into affliction and trial to know His worth and love.

I had many sore temptations and trials, faith was keenly tested at times, yet the Lord very graciously brought me through. I was very ill on one occasion and the doctor thought I must pass away. So did I; but the dear Lord came and sweetly assured me that my hope was founded on Christ, the eternal Rock of Ages, that, "My hope was built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness." Then at chapel a long time afterwards, Mr. Champion took for his text, "The King is held in the galleries." The Lord came and overwhelmed me with His love and mercy to my soul. I did not know how to get home; I was lost in wonder, love and praise. I wanted to be alone with Him whom my soul loveth. He was my Beloved and I was His. I wanted to prostrate myself before Him; He was the altogether lovely One to my soul. Another time I had a sweet blessing from the text, "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." How many times I have feared my expectation would be cut off! I seemed to be passing through a series of destructions; I longed for the Word with power.

I had longed to go to the prayer meeting at Zion and my dear sister took me, and Mr. Champion read that portion and spoke from the text, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." I did enjoy the prayer meeting and felt helped; I

little knew what it was to prepare me for.

### **Another Sore Affliction**

The next day I had a fall and fractured my thigh and the shaft of the femur was displaced. At this time I was learning to walk by the furniture. I was in the most severe pain, it being the leg which had been paralysed, and I had to pray more earnestly for strength to endure the pain. I was taken to hospital for an operation but the orthopaedic specialist refused to operate and said to give an anaesthetic would be immediate death after such a serious brain operation; but, far worse, I felt the Lord had forsaken me. I could only cry, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" and being in severe pain in soul and body, I knew not what to do. However, reading that portion one morning where the Lord Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the Holy Spirit revealed to me that I was having a tiny little fellowship with my blessed Lord in His sufferings. I felt how huge the weight of all His saints' sins since mine were so very great. But I had such a view of the dear Lord Jesus in His sufferings. I did weep at His dear feet and He did bless and help me.

I was in hospital over eight weeks and then was sent to a nursing home for six weeks, not to be moved off the bed until I went back to hospital for an X-ray. I was in such severe pain that my wicked sinful heart felt rebellious at the pain and suffering. I felt helped by the prayer of one of our deacons and also by the first part of a sermon in the *Gospel Standard* by Mr. J. Delves where he related his like experience in a serious illness he had. I had a little hope that my sins might be forgiven. I was taken back to hospital for an X-ray and had to be re-admitted into hospital that afternoon and go back on the fracture extension for a month. I had a lot of X-rays and my leg stretched, but they could do nothing more for me. The first Lord's Day of that month, the *Gospel Standard* was brought to me and I read the second part of dear Mr. J. Delves's sermon where the Lord had visited him with His love, mercy and compassion; and the dear Lord visited me in like manner. I was completely overcome with the love and mercy of Jesus my beloved Lord. The hospital ward became the gate of heaven.

At length I was discharged from hospital to lie in bed for life. I went home feeling sure my good Doctor Greer would be enabled to do something for me, which he did. It meant a painful process of exercises; there was a leg shortage of four inches so the doctor ordered me a surgical boot. One evening being in such severe pain I hardly knew how to endure—it was midnight and I was alone—the dear Lord came at once with these words:

"I feel at My heart all thy sighs and thy groans,  
For thou art most near Me. My flesh and My bones:  
In all thy distresses thy Head feels the pain;  
Yet all are most needful; not one is in vain."

The dear Lord gave me a sweet assurance that I was a member of His body the church. I could but say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name." The first four verses of Psalm ciii, Psalm cvii and hymn 420, "O bless the Lord my soul," have often been my sweet experience. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep." And so I proved it.

After being in hospital and at home for fourteen months, I had such a desire to go to Zion anniversary, and was taken there by ambulance. Mr. Champion took for his text in the morning "Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us" (Psa. lxxviii. 28). It proved such a word of help and blessing to me then, and has been many times since. Then my doctor was anxious for me to be out as much as possible. The dear friend that was with me at the accident in 1932 was then very ill and had gone to be looked after by another friend and she kindly offered my sister and I the use of her house. I shrank from it but the Lord gave me the word, "He pleased not Himself," and that made me willing to go. From there I was able to be taken in an invalid chair to chapel and was carried up the steps by very kind friends, not being able to walk alone. Many were the ups and downs in those days but, blessed be His holy Name, He brought me through. My beloved friend, Mrs. Anderson, passed away on August 9th so that meant another change for us, but dear Mrs. Bree of blessed memory offered us a home with herself, which we gladly accepted. How often would she say in the midst of trials and afflictions:

" In heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,  
He executes His firm decrees;  
And by His saints it stands confessed,  
That what He does is ever best."

### **Baptized on a Stretcher**

At this time I was very exercised about being baptized, the words being given: "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." I felt the first Person we should meet in heaven would be a baptized Lord Jesus Christ. I longed to follow Him. I knew there were many difficulties in the way bodily, it being very difficult to get down *one* step, but the dear Lord swept the difficulties away and gave me such sweet portions of His blessed Word, and assured me that "with Him I should be in safeguard"; also, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness"; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," so I was enabled to speak to Mr. Champion, and he came to see me. He asked if I had considered how it could be done. I said, "Yes." Mr. C. then said, "Will you leave it to the deacons and myself?" and I replied, "Yes." Mr. Champion arranged for me to see the deacons and I felt helped to

tell them what I humbly believed the Lord had done for me, and they decided it would be best for me to be baptized on a stretcher. I went before the church, was helped to speak, and was unanimously received.

The baptism was arranged for the Thursday evening. A friend wished me to ask my kind doctor's consent but this I felt I could not do, feeling the dear Lord had given me His divine consent. I said, "I will *tell* the doctor, if you wish," which I did. I told him I wished to be baptized by immersion, and he replied, "Whatever next, Ruth? You realise it may be the death of you." I replied, "I don't feel it will; the Lord has promised to help me; and should it prove my death, it would be nice to die following the dear Lord who was baptized." Doctor replied, "I'll give my consent; I know the Lord will look after you. He always does. I believe you will be brought safely through. The Lord bless you."

I went to the service ready dressed for my baptism and lay on the stretcher, which had a piece of rope at each corner. Just before hymn 427 was sung ("Jesus and shall it ever be"), that verse came with power:

"When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride."

Then as the deacons and one male member carried me on the stretcher to the water, that verse came so sweetly:

"We to this place are come to show  
What we to boundless mercy owe;  
The Saviour's footsteps to explore,  
And tread the path He trod before."

Then they gently let me down into the water and Mr. Champion baptized me. I saw Jesus only and, to His honour and glory I would say it, I never even felt ill. To God be all the praise.

I felt very tried about coming to the Lord's table. Satan kept telling me that I was not a real character but I begged of the Lord to enable me to go to His table and He gave me that sweet verse:

"Jesus is my great High Priest;  
Bears my name upon His breast;  
And that we may never part,  
I am sealed upon His heart."

It was sweet indeed and such a help. On receiving me into the church, Mr. Champion gave me the text, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." I was helped through the service and afterwards being put into my chair to go home, the dear Lord gave me that blessed portion "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The dear Lord has favoured me much at His table.

*(To be continued)*

## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES

### XI. How To Choose Deacons

*Mr. Philpot answers the question: How are deacons to be chosen? Does the church itself select, propose, nominate and elect its deacons? Or, do the deacons, once chosen, have the privilege to nominate and elect new deacons?*

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There can be no doubt, with the unerring Word of truth for our guide, which mode of choosing deacons is most in accordance with the Scriptures. We are not left to surmise or conjecture, but have one of the most clear and positive directions that the whole range of the New Testament affords. How were deacons chosen at the first institution of that office in the church of Christ? "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 2, 3, 4). Nothing can be more plain from this passage, both as regards precept and practice, than that the choice of deacons was put by the inspired apostles wholly and solely into the hands of the church. "Wherefore brethren, *look ye out among you seven men,*" etc. It is true that to give greater weight and solemnity to the act, and to show to all succeeding ages that it was an apostolic institution, the twelve apostles prayed with and over the newly chosen deacons after the church had set them before them, and laid their hands upon them. But the apostles did not interfere, in the slightest degree beforehand, with the election itself, nor did they nominate or even suggest any one individual for choice to the church.

This, then, is the church's charter—her divinely appointed right of self government by officers elected by her own act and deed out of her own body, uncontrolled and unfettered by the pastor or any other authority, internal or external. It is, therefore, an unscriptural and unhallowed usurpation of the church's divinely appointed right for the pastor to nominate or influence the choice of deacons, and a still greater usurpation for the deacons, when once chosen, to make fresh additions to their body. If more deacons be desirable, or any already existing deacon be removed by death or other cause, it rests wholly with the church to add to the number or to supply the vacancy; and the deacons already in office have no more right or authority to nominate who are to be appointed than they had in the first instance to choose themselves.

Unscriptural conduct is always certain to draw down the disapprobation of the Lord; and any worldly or party device to secure or perpetuate authority, in defiance of the plain scriptural

right of the church, will be sure, in the end, to punish itself. What seeming power may be gained by the deacons forming a close, self-electing corporation like that rotten system once prevalent in the municipal boroughs, but now happily put an end to, is more than lost by the dissatisfaction created in the church.

But the chief thing for all, whether pastor, deacons, or people, to bear in mind, is the law of love; and as the Lord has given into the hands of the church the right of choosing its officers, that right should be exercised wisely and well, not in a spirit of division or contention, but with a desire to consult the good of the whole church, the comfort of the pastor, and the affectionate co-operation of the deacons, as men of one heart and judgment in the things of God and the welfare of Zion, that the whole body may with one mind and spirit contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Tyranny, party spirit, and self-will are no more permissible to the church than they are to the pastor and deacons; and if the Lord has given to the church full right and power to choose her own officers, she must not abuse that right to set up a party in opposition to the minister and those already in office, and thus kindle or increase a fire which may be already secretly smouldering. She should rather choose men of peace and love, of calm temper and yet proper firmness, of good judgment and godly life, of sound experience and kind conciliating spirit, of fair gifts in prayer and conversation, some little knowledge of business and money matters, they having to manage the temporal affairs of the church, in union of heart with the pastor and their brother deacons, and generally acceptable to, as well as loved and respected by the majority of the church.

These may seem to be hard qualities to find; but we are well convinced that without a measure of them in its officers, no church, at least no large church, will enjoy much inward peace or much outward prosperity.

*Arising from the above answer, Mr. Philpot was pressed by another correspondent: What if the church abuses its right, and from ignorance, or other causes, chooses a deacon in opposition to the minister? He answers:*

Right is one thing, the way in which that right is exercised is another; and it is a sad thing with a church when the spirit of love and affection has become so decayed that pastor, deacon, or members are standing up for their several rights one against the other. The same holy Scripture which gives the church its right to choose its deacons, inculcates on it the great law of love. Now if the members of the church exercise their undoubted right, not in a spirit of love, but in a spirit of opposition, and nominate for a deacon a member unfriendly to the minister and the already existing deacons, and in other respects quite unsuitable to the office;

if they contemptuously or obstinately reject all friendly counsel or recommendation, standing firmly and rigidly on their right, what are we to say but that they are not only violating the great commandment love, but doing what they can to pull the church down instead of building it up?

“The church edifies (that is, builds up) itself in love” (Eph. iv. 16). Ministers, deacons, members are but instruments in the hands of God to build up the church on her most holy faith. To this end all should work together as one man, walking by the same rule, minding the same thing, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Where this love is wanting, where a spirit of union and affection does not influence the members of a church, there is no use laying down rules how to choose deacons and ministers. To lay down rules in this case is something like a man’s going to a chronometer-maker’s shop in Cornhill, and setting his watch by the regulator, when, from some fault in the spring or works, it loses an hour a day. Here are the Scriptures, a perfect rule of faith and practice, a divine regulator. How shall we choose the deacons? Shall the church have an un-biased right of choice? Certainly. Look at the regulator. It points to the exact hour and minute. Set the hands of the watch right. Ah, but the mainspring is broken, or too weak. There is no love or union in the church; the wheels are clogged with pride and prejudice; or there is one pinion which has two or three broken cogs; or another always pulling, but pulling the wrong way; the works want cleaning and oiling; or an old wheel should be taken out, which makes the rest go all wrong. We give you scriptural rules. We point to the regulator; but we cannot give you a new watch, or clean and oil the old one. This comes from Him who has promised to give the new heart and new spirit.

The grand point which all to whom the glory of God and the good of the church are dear should alike consider is this. Is another deacon wanted or desirable, from say, the growth of the church, or the advancing age or death of the other deacons? Now look round you in a spirit of love and affection. Who in the church, from a clear and gracious experience, discernment of the work of grace in others, spirit of love and affection, walk and conversation, calmness and evenness of temper, humility and simplicity, gifts of utterance, depth and power of grace, and general acceptance with the members seems most suited to the office? Is he attached to the minister? Is he in unison with the deacons? Has he a quiet peaceable spirit? Will he be a comfort and an ornament to the church? Will the congregation respect him as a man that fears God and adorns the doctrine? Is his character good in the town and neighbourhood and has he a good report from those that are without? Is he likely to care for the comfort and well-being of the church, not a party man, but the friend and servant of all? Then he is your man.

### A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED

*"Is anyone afflicted? let him pray."*

It came to me when sore distressed, I knew not what to do,  
By Satan harassed, self dismayed, with outward trials, too;  
"I cannot stand another day," was my impatient word,  
Forgetting the almighty power of an Almighty God.

"Is anyone afflicted? let him pray." It was so sweet:  
My peevishness was silenced, I fell humbly at His feet.  
Afflicted? Yes, in every way; how I that precept need!  
And by the kindness of my God did He my cravings heed.

Prayer first for self, confessing sin, imploring grace divine,  
That on a poor benighted soul the light of life might shine;  
O what a lot there is to plead when none but God is near!  
Thou knowest, Lord, my every need; do Thou in mercy hear.

Then prayer for those we love, that in His love they too might share;  
For God's dear people, His own word, His servants everywhere;  
For God's dear servants much we pray; "Do Thou their strength renew;  
Give them to see their labours gain and souls brought safely through."

It does not say *how* we must plead, but simply: let him pray;  
And as afflictions daily come we need Him every day;  
Confiding in His faithfulness, on Him to cast our care;  
O sweet confiding, trembling joy that this great God should hear!

It still remains, "Is anyone afflicted? let him pray,"  
And still I try as troubles come to meet them in this way.  
So slow to learn the gospel rule, I must and will confess,  
That things that are not He does heed and with His blessing bless.

W. 11.5.63.

### A SYMPATHISING SAVIOUR

*From Thomas Manton on Isaiah liii.*

A man can the better comfort others when he hath had the experience of their miseries in himself. Christ knew how sad it was with His own soul when He was acquainted with these griefs, and therefore no doubt He is willing and able to help you. Experienced men are pitiful; those that have suffered pity others when they are in the like case. It is God's charge often to Israel, that having been strangers in the land of Egypt, they should learn to pity strangers. And certainly whatever is good in the creature is eminently so in Christ. He hath stronger impressions of affection and pity than we have. Mark what the apostle saith: "For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all things tempted as we are, yet without sin." Christ knew how it was with Himself. In the like experiences and afflictions, therefore, it cannot but work upon His bowels, though men's hearts are shut up.

*We regret that the obituaries have had to be held over till next month owing to pressure of space.*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD

DECEMBER 1972

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MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. i. 9; ROM. xi. 7; ACTS viii. 37, 38, MATT. xxviii. 19

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## THE ANGELS' SONG

*Sermon preached by Mr. J. S. Green at Gower Street Memorial Chapel, London, on December 25th, 1958.*

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**Text:** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke. ii. 14).

Our text is that which was sung by the angelic host at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. These sinless angels needed not any redemption, but such was their joy as the purposes of God were accomplished in the gift of His dear Son for the redemption of poor sinners, that they broke forth into this glorious song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." I have often been struck by the joy the angels had as God brought to a blessed fruition that which was in His eternal mind. We have earlier on in the Bible the wonderful promise which God gave immediately after man's fall, when He promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And that was the reason for the Lord Jesus Christ becoming incarnate—that He might bruise the serpent's head, and deliver for ever and for ever those who were ruined by reason of the fall.

My friends, this was the express purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ taking that body, why He took humanity into union with His divinity—that He might gain the victory over sin and Satan, and deliver His dear people for ever from the sad effects of sin. He could not do this as the eternal Son of God; but by becoming that wondrous Person, Immanuel, the Son of God *and* Son of Man, He *could* deliver all His people, that number the Father gave to Him, which no man could number, out of every kindred, tribe and tongue. And these angels knew that this wondrous Babe, who was born of Mary, could accomplish this, could bring this about, and in their song it caused this rejoicing. How much more should you and I rejoice if we have been favoured by the Holy Spirit to feel that Mary brought forth this wondrous Babe to save us from all our sins!

It was said of Him before His birth: "And His Name shall be called Jesus." Wonderful Name! A mercy to be taught the Name of Jesus! God's servants preach this wondrous Name; they are all favoured to know it and to love it, and they are made to feel that it is a Name above every name. My friends, do you and I know that Name? Do we love that Name? Have we

entered a little into the true and blessed meaning of that Name? "His Name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." As the Holy Spirit opens up this Name to us, we shall be favoured, and we shall be taught to love it more and more. There is no name in heaven, there is no name on earth, like the Name of Jesus.

Now the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest." The first thing, then, in the redemption of man, is God's glory. It is wonderful to consider that God will be glorified in the salvation of sinners. And when God's people are favoured to know something of God's gift to them, even the gift of His only begotten Son, they begin that everlasting song. They begin to praise Him; they begin to bless Him; they begin to do that which is set forth in the text, "Glory to God in the highest."

First, it means thanksgiving. Have you and I been favoured to thank God for His unspeakable gift? Have we ever thanked God for Jesus Christ? Thanked Him because we felt God gave Him to be our Jesus, our blessed Saviour? If so, then we have commenced that everlasting song. We have entered a little into that which the angels here sang, "Glory to God in the highest." A wonderful blessing it is to be enabled from our hearts to thank God for the most wonderful gift of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ!

"Glory to God in the highest." You may think sometimes you cannot thank Him on earth as you would. But you sometimes feel that when you see this glorious Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He is, then you *will* thank Him. This word "glory" means praise. And so the angels praised God. Poor sinners, taught by the Holy Spirit here on earth, by faith do sometimes praise God. Occasionally we sing that verse: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." It is a great thing to be enabled from your heart to praise God, to glorify Him, and to bless Him for His goodness and for His mercy towards you.

And the text, in the experience of God's dear people, refers also to the Holy Spirit. Without His grace, without His teaching, we should know nothing of these wondrous things. We should be satisfied to a great extent to worship some little doll in a crib, or something like that. That would satisfy us. Or we might go to chapel, and hear His Name mentioned, and that would be sufficient for us. But, taught by the Holy Spirit, made to feel what poor, helpless, hopeless sinners we are in ourselves, we shall bless, glorify and praise the Holy Spirit for opening up these wonderful things to our poor souls.

My friends, have you ever gone to Bethlehem in faith? Have you ever been favoured, as was Simeon, to take up that Child in your arms, the arms of living faith, to look upon Him as Mary held Him in her arms, and feel that He took that sacred body, that sinless body, to save your soul, to redeem you from all your

sins? To look upon Him, and to feel in your heart by a gracious experience *why* He was born. When you are favoured thus to worship God by the enablings of the Holy Spirit, this first clause in the text will be very precious to you, and the language of your heart will be, "Glory to God in the highest." Good Mr. Hart says:

" But lo! the Second Adam came,  
The serpent's subtle head to bruise;  
He cancels his malicious claim,  
And disappoints his devilish views;  
Ransoms poor prisoners with His blood,  
And brings the sinner back to God."

That is the reason why God gave His Son. That is the reason why the Son of God became incarnate—that He might "ransom poor prisoners with His blood, and bring the sinner back to God." And that is the only way to be enabled to praise and thank God rightly from our hearts.

But what of the Son of God when we come to consider His condescension? What wonderful love He must have had towards poor sinners! It was love that made Him come to earth; it was love that made Him take that sinless body. O, haven't you sometimes blessed Him, glorified Him and praised Him? Haven't you entered a little into that precious truth as described by Paul in the Corinthians: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich"?

So in this first clause, I believe, we have the Trinity set forth; and those taught by the Spirit to worship the Babe that Mary brought forth, will bless Father, Son and Holy Ghost. My friends, you may sometimes feel you do not know much of this. But bless God if you know a little. If the Holy Spirit has taught you, so to speak, a few notes of the song of redemption, you will get to heaven. And this will be the theme of that song in heaven: "Glory to God in the highest." And if we did not know a little in a saving way of the Lord Jesus Christ becoming that Babe, we could not possibly join in that everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all. Those taught by the Spirit, made to know and feel what poor, miserable things they are by nature, are made unspeakably happy when they feel that Jesus became poor that He might make them rich for ever and for ever. I believe, generally speaking, there are only moments when God's people on earth enjoy these things. But O how sweet and precious when you and I can from our hearts worship God, and can say, "Glory to God in the highest"!

The second phrase in the text says: "And on earth peace." When sin entered into the world, peace fled away. There could never have been any such thing as peace had it not been for the wonderful love and mercy of God in promising His Son to man's lost race. And these angels, in their praises, said, "Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth peace." What a wonderful Person the Lord Jesus Christ is, that He should be able to bring peace! In the prophecy of Isaiah, we read one of the most wonderful names given Him—"the Prince of Peace." It is a peace which comes with a sacred authority. It is said in the Scripture that it is "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." And one of the minor prophets, as he looked forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, said, "And this Man shall be the peace." This glorious Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be the peace. We shall never find any true peace in any other.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said, "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." So Christ Himself is the peace of poor sinners. He has made peace. He *is* the peace. Have you and I a sure knowledge of Him? Poor sinner, do you long for a little peace today? We look into our own hearts, and we see no peace there by nature. We are poor, fallen, sinful creatures. Some of you may look at your own life, and you feel that many things come up and testify against you. But some of the very worst of sinners have been favoured to find that peace as by faith they have viewed Jesus, viewed that wonderful Babe, by faith gone through His wondrous life, and viewed Him suffer for them, shedding His precious blood for them. The blood of Jesus whispers peace. It brings a solid, sacred peace into the hearts of poor sinners.

Some of you this morning may long for that true peace. You may have thought at this season of the year, What are all earthly pleasures to me without Jesus? You may feel you can hardly enjoy anything because you feel to lack this peace. Well, poor sinner, may God help you to look alone to Jesus and to remember that the text says that God gave His dear Son, and His dear Son came on earth that there might be peace. There can be no peace whilst you and I are still at enmity with God; no peace whilst you are struggling against the will of God. But when the Holy Spirit comes and enables you sweetly to submit to the will of God, when the Holy Spirit enables you to bow before this blessed Babe, and to feel He is your Saviour, He is your peace, and that He took that body, that humanity, that He might give that flesh and blood for the redemption of your soul, *there* is peace. You won't find true peace anywhere else.

There are those who in their religion have a false peace. I have no doubt that many a Roman Catholic has a natural confidence in his priest, and goes before that priest and makes confession of sin, and receives what is called absolution. And he leaves the priest with a peace in his mind; but it is not a true peace. No. It won't help him at the last day. But the Lord Jesus Christ gives true peace. He gives a solid peace. His very Name, if you know it, will speak a blessed peace home to your

soul. *You do not need anything else to take you to heaven but a right knowledge of that one Person—Jesus.* There is everything in Him; and if by faith you can just lay hold upon His precious Name and worship Him as your peace, then you will know *why* He came to earth. You will know what He brought with Him on earth because you will have it in your heart. You will have peace. I have felt it, I believe, but I cannot express it. I know it has a precious effect upon the soul. It removes the fear and dread of death. It removes all terror from the heart regarding God, because as you are favoured to know His dear Son and to worship God in Him, you worship Him as that God of everlasting love. And this brings with it joy, which is unspeakable, and you feel that God is for you, that God is on your side.

When under Sinai's fiery law, when under condemnation, a sinner feels God is against him, and will be against him for ever and for ever. But now the sinner can see that God has given His Son and poured out all His wrath against the sins of His people upon His Son, and that sinners can see that through the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus, their sins are all put away. "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "*Any* man." Precious word! Sacred word! "Any man"—however poor, however guilty; though guilty as Mary or Manasseh. "If *any* man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"—One who can plead your cause. He cannot plead anything in you by nature but He pleads His own merits on your behalf. He calls your sins His own. And when you have the witness of this truth in your heart, then you can call Jesus yours. You will feel that He came that on earth there might be peace.

This will enable you to glorify God. This will enable you to bless and to adore that great God of heaven and earth, and you will feel that He is your Friend, your everlasting Friend, your God and your Saviour. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." It is a blessed thing to be put into the sweet enjoyment of a little of this peace as we journey on here below. We are going on quickly towards the end of life, and some of you according to your years know it cannot be long before you are called to die. Have you enjoyed a little of this gospel peace? Have you felt a little peace flow into your hearts through the blood of Christ? Have you felt that He became that Man that He might honour the law for you? Have you felt sometimes that that law can have nothing to do with you? Yours will be a wonderful end, sinner! It will be a wonderful end. I think on Tuesday evening a little of this peace flowed into me, and I felt that if I were called to die, it would be a blessed death for me because Jesus became this Babe for me. He took into union with His divinity that spotless humanity that He might

bleed and die for a worm like me. Never say these things are beyond you, sinner. A little babe can understand them as taught by the blessed Spirit. Ask God to unveil the sweet mysteries of His love to you, and then you will understand them. And you will feel "on earth peace," and you will look forward to entering that heaven of everlasting peace when the work of grace is done in you.

Lastly, the text says, "Good will toward men." The good will of God, "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. It is a good will, a blessed will, a sacred will. It was the good will of God from all eternity that Jesus Christ should come in the fulness of time and save His people from their sins. It is the good will of God toward men that when the work of grace is done in each of them, they shall, through this wonderful Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, enter heaven. It is a mercy to have an interest in God's will, isn't it? There is nothing better, poor sinner, than this, to feel that you have got an interest in the everlasting will of God, to feel that He loved you in covenant before time began, and engraved your name in His fair book of life and grace; to feel that God has a good will towards you from all eternity, and that it is His will that you shall at last be with Him in heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ said when He was here on earth, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." That is what God's will is—that all His dear people at last may behold His glory through this Man in heaven, may worship Him for ever and for ever. It will then be, "Glory to God in the highest." When all the redeemed get safely home, then this will be sweetly fulfilled for ever and ever: "Glory to God in the highest."

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### THE GATHERING TO SHILOH

*By Augustus Montague Toplady (1740-1778)*

It is certain that the promised Shiloh is come (Gen. xlix. 10); and Jesus Christ the righteous, in whose childhood the sceptre departed, is both the Son of the Most High God, and likewise the true Messiah, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.

Shiloh may be rendered the Son; also the Saviour; likewise, the peaceable, and the prosperous one. The Septuagint translates, or rather paraphrases it, "He for whom (all) things are laid up, or kept in store." In His adorable Person, and most wonderful offices and transactions, Jesus exhausts every one of those significations. He is:

1. The everlasting Son of the Father, as God; and the Son of Mary, as Man.

2. He is the effectual, the only, and the certain Saviour, i.e. deliverer and preserver of His elect body, the church.

3. He is the alone peace-maker between God and men by the infinitely precious blood of His cross.

4. He prospered and prevailed to the uttermost in the whole and in every branch of His mediatorial undertaking. No part of His success, as a Saviour, is uncertain, or suspended on a per-adventure. The reward of His humiliation lies in the absolute and infallible salvation of every individual sinner for whom He died. And, as His work was perfect, His reward is sure.

5. For Him all things are reserved. He is the appointed heir of all things; the Omega, or central end, no less than the Alpha, or author, of the worlds. All beings are by Him, and for Him. The elect, both angels and men, stoop to the sceptre of His grace; and the reprobate, both diabolic and human, must submit to the rod of His power.

“Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” It is plain, from this clause of the text before us, that redemption by Christ is not that random and precarious thing which the Arminian scheme pretends. The salvation He wrought does not lie at sixes and sevens. It is by no means unsettled, uncertain, or undetermined. The dignity of His divine person, the infinite value of His obedience and sacrifice, together with the justice of His almighty Father to whom the inestimable price was paid, render it impossible that any single soul should perish, for whom such a Redeemer died. It is neither at the option, nor in the power, of thy corrupt free-will to render His mediation effectual or ineffectual. All is firmly fixed by the unalterable will, the immovable decree, and the everlasting covenant of the uncreated Three. Christ did not come into the world at haphazard, nor live and die for a maybe. He was born, and shed His blood, for a peculiar people, whom His own sanctifying grace was to make zealous of good works (Titus ii. 14); and that He might gather together into one glorified company all the children of God that were scattered abroad (John xi. 52).

The elect world are the great *all* for whom He lived and bled, even the whole world of His predestinated people. And every one of these His people shall be gathered to Him. “Unto Him *shall* the gathering of the people be.” As surely as they were created by His power, so surely shall they, in conversion, be gathered to Him by the efficacious grace of His Holy Spirit. As surely as Christ was born *for* them at Bethlehem, so surely shall He be formed *in* them, their hope of glory, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost.

And indeed were not this the case, the whole of Jacob’s prophecy would not be true. The text positively avers that the

people (i.e. the elect people of God) shall be gathered to Christ. And if free grace say, Aye, it is in vain for free-will to say, No. God hath said, The people *shall* be gathered; and faith echoes back the promise with, "Then gathered the people shall be; for Thy counsel must stand, and Thou wilt do all Thy pleasure." Happy it is for us that God hath taken upon Himself to gather and convert us to His Son. Unless He was the gatherer, not one of us would ever be gathered. Free-will never yet led a sinner to Christ, and never will, while the world remains. We are free enough to depart from God and holiness, but we are not free and desirous to return to Him, and forsake our sins, and be conformed to Him in righteousness, until His grace make us free in the day of His power upon our hearts. Free-will has led millions and millions of souls to the place of torment but it never lifted a single soul to heaven. All the sins that ever were committed were committed by free-will; but it is only the transforming grace of God that inspires and adorns us with the mind that was in Christ.

You, therefore, who profess to believe in Jesus as the Shiloh that was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, beg of God that He may not permit you to rest satisfied with a mere speculative assent to the gospel history. If we are saved in the next life, we must be gathered to Christ in this. Nothing short of the inward, effectual call can stamp us Christians in deed and in truth. Nothing will make us lead holy lives on earth but an experience of the life and power of grace in our souls. Nor will anything short of Jacob's faith make us face death with Jacob's comfort.

And what is death to those that are born of God? It is but another gathering of them unto Christ. The soul of a saint is gathered from the body as a flower from the stalk to adorn the court of heaven, and to bloom for ever in the bosom of God. They who are gathered to Him by grace are at death only gathered into glory.

Their bodies, too, shall be gathered from the grave and rescued from the dominion of death when Shiloh comes the second time. He, whose voice is as the sound of many waters, will say to His angels, when He appears in the clouds of heaven, Gather My saints together unto Me, who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice; who died trusting in My righteousness and depending on the merit of My blood, which I shed for the remission of their sins when I offered Myself up in sacrifice on the cross.

To Him, in some sense, shall all flesh come. Before Him shall be gathered all nations, and at His tribunal shall every knee bow. Thus, in every signification of the term, "to Him shall the gathering of the people be." He will sever them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left.

Eternal Spirit of grace, gather us here to Him, by the energy of Thy renewing power. So, at death, shall our souls be gathered into heaven, and our mortal bodies shall be sown in the grave, only to be ripened and refined until the resurrection of the just.

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### WONDERFUL

*By Ambrose Serle (1742-1812)*

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No title could with stricter propriety be applied to the great Redeemer. Consider Him in any point of view, either as God or Man, or as God and Man in one Person; He is altogether wonderful. If we contemplate His works, both of creation and redemption, we shall find some legible characters of this wonderful Lord indelibly written upon them all. And if we look into His Word, the grand scheme and accomplishment of eternal redemption rises full in our view, if we have either eyes to see its glory or sense to apprehend its worth. The wonderful things of the law, or mind of God, are distributed in gracious profusion through every page; and nothing but the gross veil of darkness, which sin hath cast upon our fallen minds, could prevent us from being charmed with their beauty, wisdom, and truth. All that Christ did, and all that He suffered, both to introduce an everlasting righteousness, and to expiate sin, was wonderful and glorious. There is, indeed, no end to the wonders of this precious Saviour in heaven and in earth. The angels pry into and admire them; the devils have felt and been astonished at them. Men alone, left to themselves, are unconcerned, and form a wonder of a different kind; most interested of all the creatures in the blessings of Jesus, they are naturally the least impressed by their value of any.

When Christ, the blessed Angel of the covenant, appeared to Manoah, He assumed this name Wonderful. But Manoah, feeling like a true believer the weight of his sinfulness, but failing like Peter under the sense of the load, mistook His character, and feared that because he had seen God he should surely die. Manoah confessed that He was God, but seems to have forgotten that He was God the Saviour, till his faithful wife reminded him of the gracious promises which this Saviour left behind for their consolation.

If Christ were a mere man, what possible right could He have to so distinguished a title? If He had been the first of all the works of God, He might, indeed, appear wonderful to the scanty reason of man; but He could not be essentially and properly wonderful in *Himself*. This is peculiar to the origin of all that is great and magnificent, even Jehovah Himself. All that

is remarkable and astonishing in the universe of beings and things is entirely derived; and there must be a cause, superior to all, which, of necessity, must transcend in wonder. In this respect, we may say with Milton:

“These are Thy glorious works, Parent of good,  
Almighty, Thine this universal frame,  
Thus wondrous fair: *Thyself* how wondrous then!”

The prophet Isaiah could only style Him by this great Name in reference to His divinity; nor can the other titles, which follow in this glorious climax (Isa. ix. 6), be attributed, without blasphemy, to any creature. The prophet had no thought, in this case, but of his Maker, and would have been guilty of a strange piece of nonsense if he had proclaimed a mere mortal Redeemer, who, notwithstanding, was to rule and govern without end. Such a declaration could have afforded no comfort to his own soul nor have administered any hope to God's people. If Isaiah had known no better Redeemer than this, he had never been able to have sustained the malice of his enemies, nor could have patiently endured to be sawn asunder, in his old age, for the testimony of Jesus.\*

As a proof that this divine Name was not misapplied to the great Redeemer in the Old Testament, we find that in the New, He constantly exhibited His right to the appellation by the vast and continued series of miracles and prodigies which He wrought: and He wrought these at a time when not only the world was learned and inquisitive, but when the Jewish nation also had long been unaccustomed to such things, the appearance of miracles having ceased among them for many hundred years. Here we may behold Him (to use the words of Job) as God “who doeth great things—and wonders without number”; and these demonstrate Him to be “the Lord of hosts, wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” To these the apostles appealed as evidences, as supernatural and irresistible evidences of the truth of their mission and the glory of their Master. Signs and wonders were continually done by His Name, both in proof of His power in heaven and in earth, and of the exaltation of His wonderful Name above all things.

What strikes the Christian with supreme amazement is that this mighty God should become a *child*, should in human flesh be born into this world, and then be tormented out of it, for the salvation of His rebellious creatures. This renders the Messiah **WONDERFUL** indeed! “He took not on Him the nature of angels”; *that* would have been a great degradation, but He assumed the flesh of man, of fallen man, of hateful and hating man, of man His enemy and averse to be His friend. This was emptying or humbling Himself beyond conception. If Alexander the Great,

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\*This was an ancient tradition among the Jews.

who conquered the eastern world, had stooped to have given up his life for the preservation of a few ants, even after they had annoyed him, his conduct would have yielded but a very faint image of the infinite condescension of Jehovah-Jesus in the salvation of His redeemed.

“ Let all the world fall down and know,  
That none but God such love could show.”

What abundant reason, then, has every believer to rejoice, and, with the prophet, to cry out: “ O Lord, Thou art my God; I will exalt Thee, I will praise Thy Name; for Thou hast done wonderful things; Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.” If we felt and understood more of the wonders of grace, we should grow more and more astonished that such transcendent mercies should strike us so little, and that our hearts could possibly be so cold as they are at the very mention of them.

Be it thy privilege and portion, happy soul, who knowest whom thou hast believed, to turn away thine eyes from men, from the world, and from self, to *Him*, who is “ glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ”! He hath given thee a curious, a precious girdle indeed; and with it do thou, therefore, “ gird up the loins of thy mind.” Contemplate on what *He* hath wrought; and remember, He hath wrought it all for thee. Every believer has an interest in the whole of that which Jesus has done for all believers. It belongs to all in general, and yet to every one in particular. Consider, then, the work and offices of thy wonderful Saviour, as undertaken and executed in thy particular behalf, and as though thou wert the only one He came to redeem. His redemption, indeed, would not have been complete without thee; for without the weakest and the least believer (O happy truth!), the covenant of grace and the work of grace cannot be fully accomplished. He, who made His covenant sure, hath made thy name sure for ever therein. The number of the elect is certain, and *must* be fulfilled. The planetary orbs vary not a moment or a hair’s breadth in their courses; and there cannot be an atom added to, or taken from, the universe of nature; nor will there be any thing, or any person, either wandering to disorder, or wanting to complete, the system of grace. Let thy heart join, then, with the heart of the prophet, in saying: “ How great are God’s signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation.”

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There is much the same difference between election and effectual calling as between a private manuscript and a printed book. In election, God, as it were, wrote and entered us in His heavenly register, but it is still kept by Him, and none know the contents but Himself. Whereas in effectual calling, God, as it were, prints off a sheet of the book of life, and publishes it and makes it known to the soul.

Gurnall

## WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

By Daniel Moore c. 1880.

“What think ye of Christ?” A very important question this, regard it in what light we may. Whether as a trial of a man’s creed, if it be sound; of his personal religion, if it be deep; of his hope of final salvation, if it be well grounded, and sure, and scriptural—the question is one which goes down to the very root of our Christianity. If a man be wrong on this point, so far as relates to his own moral state before God, he will be right in nothing else. For, with light or inadequate views of Christ, will be sure to be found light views of sin, light thoughts of the divine holiness, a light appreciation of what is due to the claims of a righteous Governor, a light estimation of that true conversion of heart without which no man shall see God. All things take their colouring from this first mistake. The doctrine is wrong. The practice is wrong. The heart is wrong. The man is yet under the power of a blinded mind—as ignorant of the truth, and as opposed to it, as were any of those cavilling bystanders to whom this momentous question was first addressed. There is truth, as well as force, in those lines of the Olney hymn:

“What think ye of Christ? is the test  
To try both your state and your scheme;  
You cannot be right in the rest,  
Unless you think rightly of Him.”

Passing by the aspect of this question towards the Pharisees, we may find our profit in considering what it imports, when addressed to any one of ourselves. And then it will appear that to ask, “What think ye of Christ?” is, in effect, to ask, *how* we think of Him? and *when* we think of Him? and *why* we think of Him as we do? It is to ask, whether we have hope in His mercy, faith in His promise, peace through His atoning sacrifice, a sense of acceptance through His finished work? It is to ascertain whether, habitually and as part of our daily life and walk, our eyes are towards His mercy-seat, our feet towards His testimonies, our chief desires towards His approving smile, and all our heart’s best affections towards a nearer and closer communion with Him. These thoughts of ours they are that distinguish the Christian, and make the man. We are to Christ what our thoughts of Him are. Some think not of Christ at all. Some think of Him, but not worthily. Some, while thinking of Him worthily, so far as relates to any speculative views of His character, yet do not think of Him to any practical, or vital, or saving purpose. Surely, to all these, there is another question to be asked besides, “What think ye of Christ?”—namely, “What does Christ think of you?”

What think we then of Christ as the Rock and Strength of our salvation? “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a

tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." This stone, as we know, is Christ: Christ mighty to save.

"Neither is there salvation in any other." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." If we build upon any other basis—upon our duties, that they have been regular; upon our prayers, that they have been frequent; upon our charities and alms-deeds, that they have been large; upon our character, that all men speak well of us, or upon our life, that it is without reproach and stain—we shall find that our shelter is but a refuge of lies, a flimsy structure of base and untempered mortar which "the blast of the terrible One will lay even with the ground." Christ is called the Foundation, because He must lie at the bottom of all our hopes of a happy immortality. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." If our prayers are heard, it is because He presents them. If our services are accepted, it is because His grace prompts them. If our repentance is sincere, it is because it is His gift. If we have peace in life, it will be because He guides us by His counsel. If we have hope in death, it will be because He is receiving us into His glory.

And, once more, to right views of Christ are we indebted for all our religious happiness and tranquillity. "They that know Thy Name," says the Psalmist, "will put their trust in Thee." And Peter writes, "Unto you that believe He is precious." For if we truly believe, Christ must be precious to us; precious, for the glory of His character; precious, for the infinite reach of His atonement; precious, for the sufficiency of His grace; precious, for the aboundings of His compassion, and sympathy, and love. And this will make every thing in and about Christ to be precious also. His Word will be precious, for it will guide. His ordinances will be precious, for they will refresh. His Spirit will be precious, for He will set the seal of the covenant on our hearts. His day will be precious, for it will make us think of the time when we shall spend an everlasting Sabbath with Him in heaven. Thus our thoughts of Christ will, for the most part, be governed by what our experiences of Him have been. If He has become endeared to us by many sacred and cherished memories—by a kind promise of forgiveness, when we were first awakened to a sense of sin; by gleams of hope and light, vouchsafed to us in the dark night of despondency and mental sorrow; by great deliverances, wrought for us when some danger threatened the best interests of our souls—in such cases, not words, but only the grateful heart can make answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?"

Of course, the main design of our Lord, in proposing this striking question, was to call attention to His own divine claims. The central glory of Christianity is Christ. The most convincing evidence of Christianity is Christ. The profoundest mystery of

Christianity is Christ. Ages before His incarnation, it was foretold of Him, "His name shall be called Wonderful." And wonderful He is. And in this we glory. We confess, and deny not, that "great is the mystery of godliness." We feel that the doctrine of the Mediator is our life. We love to think of Him as He was revealed to the prophet Ezekiel, by the brook, as the enthroned presence of the upper world—Light of Light, God of God, Very God of Very God—and yet withal a glorious similitude, which mortal eyes might look upon—one like unto the Son of Man.

It is in this character, under the softening aspect of the incarnation, that we are enabled to feel towards Him who is Emmanuel, God with us, the sentiment of personal love, personal gratitude, the fervid glow of a holy and heavenly friendship. "We love Him, because He first loved us." We love to be in frequent meditation on His glorious character and offices; love to sit at His feet, and learn wisdom from the written Word; love to lift up the heart to Him amidst the world's "crowded loneliness"; love to realise His nearness to us in the closet, in the sanctuary, in holy ordinances; nay, love to feel that heaven itself has no higher prerogative than this—a sight of the Redeemer in His glory, and power to worship, without a veil, before His throne: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

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## CONCERN FOR A PASTOR

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Dear Samuel—I have been feeling I should like to pen you a few lines on the important matter you mentioned to me last evening in respect to your exercises of mind in pleading with the Lord respecting His providing and sending us a pastor at Rotherfield. How much I can wish for such a mercy to be given to us in the position in which we are placed as a church and people! I prayerfully hope and wish that it may please the Lord to do so. He knows our position in every way and I do honestly wish and try to plead that such a mercy may be given to us, that He will lay it heavily on the church and people's minds to wish for it and pray for it so that it may become a united feeling in their minds to beg for it.

There would no doubt be some opposition stirred up from some quarters against it, but that would be no proof of its being a wrong step, for Satan is sure to oppose such a blessing to the people of God. I trust I have been feeling some earnestness in pleading with the Lord for such a mercy at different times in our widowed state as a church and people, and felt some renewal of it yesterday.

So I shall hope to see some more movements that way among the people if it shall please the Lord to lay it upon the minds of the people.

I can quite see and feel for you in your future position. What a mercy it would be if the Lord would be pleased to grant that desired mercy! I have a distinct recollection of the coming of Mr. Dickens and what I passed through in exercise of mind and secretly pleading with Him, but was eventually brought through and it was graciously proved to be the Lord's own mind and will for him to be stated at Rotherfield for 25 years. May the Lord graciously encourage you still to call upon Him who has said in His Word He will be enquired of to do these things for them. The almighty power of God is all-sufficient to accomplish it and it is only He can rightly open a way.

I think this is all I will mention about it at present, and may both Grace and you be united in the matter. With love to both from

Your affectionate Father,

Undated (about 1924)

Thos. Pollington

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## HITHERTO

*The Experience of Miss Ruth Beesley*  
(Continued from page 378)

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### Another Sore Trial

[Miss Beesley recounts a few changes, and then speaks of staying at Croydon for a time.]

I was so looking forward to the Centenary Services to be held at West Street Chapel, Croydon, but alas! I had another accident (so called) on the Wednesday previous to the day of the Services. My very kind friend, Mr. Hicks, had bought me a chair, driven by electric power, to enable me to get out more. I had made this chair a very special matter of prayer that I might be able to use it, and felt that prayer would be answered. But I was mistaken. The Lord said, No. The first time Mr. Hicks took me out in it at Croydon, it developed a fault, mounted a grass verge, and overturned. Mr. Hicks received shock and cut face. I had fractured collar bone, fractured ribs, fractured knee, and hurt my arm and chest. No operation was performed in West Croydon Hospital because of my serious brain operation. I felt distressed while in hospital and felt that all these things were against me. Dear Mr. Foster came to see me and I told him how I felt. The portion he was led to read, his remarks on God's everlasting love and His care, and his prayer were all made a blessing to me. But again I sank so low. Then the dear Lord came with the word, "For He maketh sore,

and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole." Then I could rejoice in Christ as my Saviour.

After being in Croydon about three months, I was taken to Raunds in Northamptonshire. There I had a fall while trying the leg, which made it worse.

After being at Raunds several months, I was taken back to Leicester to my dear sister's, and was then under the skill and care of my good Dr. Greer. He was shocked at my condition, but his great patience and skill were wonderful. By tiny exercises three times a day, and being in bed eight months, the use began to come back into my leg. Then at the Anniversary at Zion, I was able to be taken to chapel by ambulance for the services. In the morning, dear Mr. Champion's text was: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?" It was a time of rejoicing to my soul.

Another time in great distress, going to the prayer meeting and feeling too ill to continue the journey, I had to cry out to Him for strength to continue the journey, which He mercifully gave. That evening the reading was John xiv. The first verse came with divine power: "Let not your heart be troubled" (or "violently agitated"). Mine was; but the dear Lord came and lifted my burden right off my heart and bore it for me.

"I would for ever speak His Name,  
In sounds to mortal ears unknown;  
With angels join to praise the Lamb,  
And worship at His Father's throne."

[After writing of good hearing times and many changes through which she passed, Miss Beesley continues.]

### **Concern about a Home**

On May 17th, 1962, I came to dear Mrs. Pinnell again. On May 27th, I was favoured to be taken to Edmonton Chapel for evening service, when dear Mr. Pack preached from Genesis xxii. 13, 14. I was specially helped in this service by Mr. Pack's reference to verse 8: "My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb," and by the way he spoke of the thickets and trials some of God's people have to pass through. I was very tried about getting another home, but through that service, I was enabled to believe that God had provided His dear Son, the Lamb of God, and that my sins were laid upon Him, and that He would provide me with another home in His own time. "Jehovah-Jireh; the Lord will provide."

On June 14th, I was taken to Edmonton Anniversary Services, when dear Mr. J. W. Tyler took for his text: "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it, Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The afternoon service was a most solemn one, Mr. Tyler asking the question: Were we real children of God, or

only like Ichabod? What proof had we of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts? I felt I was not a real child of God and yet had made an open profession of His Name. The trial of faith was very severe for an hour and I had to cry for mercy, and that I might know I was a real child of God. Then the dear Lord most blessedly came and brought again to my soul His former promises: "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; and, "He will save, He will rejoice over thee with singing; He will rest in His love." This brought peace and joy. Then as dear Mr. Tyler spoke (at the evening service) of raising another Ebenezer stone to His praise for help given, and saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," my soul was sweetly blessed. I felt such a desire to sit under Mr. Tyler's ministry, although at that time it seemed impossible.

However, I went home and was alone in the house for another six months with only daily help. I cried to God to open a way for me, and used lawful means (as I was getting worse), or begged that He would send me a resident help; but nothing came. I felt all these things were against me, and the enemy said, "Where is now thy God?" At last I felt the iron gates must open of their own accord because the God of the iron gates still lives. To my sorrow, rebellion at the Lord's dealings at times arose. Yet I could only beg of the Lord to help me.

### **A Way Made**

November 3rd, 1962, I felt to give up all hope of the Lord moving me, and felt it must be His will for me to remain where I was. On November 4th, being the Lord's day, I had a comfortable day reading His Word and a sermon. November 5th, I woke with the words: "I will be with thee in all places whithersoever thou goest." I thought, "That means that I have to go into hospital again." But when the post came that morning, there was a letter from a friend that I had not heard from for some years saying that she had heard that I was living alone and needed help; would I like to come and live with her, and she and her sister would look after me? Also, when I was able to go, she would take me to The Dicker Chapel—the very spot where I wished to go! As I read Miss G. Verrall's letter, the words came with power: "This is the way; walk ye in it." "I will be with thee in all places whithersoever thou goest." And my reading that evening was: "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." So feeling it was the Lord's provision for me, and His will that I should go, I wrote and accepted my dear friend's very kind offer to go and live with her and her dear sister at Horsebridge, Sussex.

There were many things to be attended to. The house would have to be sold. There was the clearing of the house and some things would have to be stored. I felt enabled to place

everything in the dear Lord's hands. The solicitor and house agent were most kind to me, and my kind niece did all the packing. I could only say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together." My very good doctor, who had looked after me for thirty years, was kindness itself. He had hoped to look after me to the end; the Lord had sent him to me, and his dear wife and family were so kind to me.

### **The Move to Sussex**

During December, 1962, we had much snow; the roads were frozen. Yet on December 13th, the day arranged for me to come to Horsebridge all the way by car, it was a lovely sunny day. We had sunshine all the way. I could but praise the Lord for His great kindness to me. He did indeed make His goodness pass before me in the way, and I had no ill effects of the journey.

On the Sabbath morning, December 16th, 1962, Miss Verrall took me to The Dicker Chapel, and dear Mr. Tyler took for his text: "Thy kingdom come." How I longed for it to come more into my heart! It was good to my soul and I wept at God's goodness to a wretch like me.

I felt rather nervous at the busy Dicker roundabout, having to cross it on the road in my chair, but the dear Lord gave me the sweet promise: "With Me thou shalt be in safeguard," which took all fear away. Owing to the severe weather and much snow, I was not able to go to chapel for nine weeks. This was a severe trial to me as I so longed to be in the courts of the Lord's house.

Early morning of February 24th, 1963, I felt very ill and wondered what might happen. It was a lovely day and, through God's great goodness and His healing power, I was able to be taken to The Dicker Chapel that afternoon. Our beloved pastor's text was: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you." Mr. Tyler referred to the man who fell among thieves, leaving him half dead. That is how I felt spiritually. But at that service, Jesus, like the good Samaritan, came just where I was, pouring in the blessed oil and wine of His gospel, binding up my wounds. I felt Jesus had paid my debts on Calvary and had brought me to His gospel inn at The Dicker. Mr. Tyler asked the question: Have you been very ill in hospital and had a little fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ? My mind went back to the sweet fellowship I had with Him in His sufferings in hospital and when at home in such severe pain, and He blessedly came again with the words:

"I feel at my heart all thy sighs and thy groans,  
For thou art most near Me, My flesh and My bones;  
In all thy afflictions thy Head feels the pain,  
Yet all are most needful; not one is in vain."

I received such a blessing that afternoon that I was lost in wonder, love and praise at God's mercy to me. He did comfort me indeed.

Mr. Tyler was led into my soul's experience, and yet did not know how I felt at that time. The dear Lord continued to bless me so much, especially under the preached Word.

### **United with the Church at The Dicker**

November 10th, 1963, was another day of blessing to my soul. My cup ran over with the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our beloved pastor's text: "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord," etc. (Jer. xxxi. 12). It was so good to me as Mr. Tyler spoke of Christ Jesus the Foundation, Redeemer and faithful Friend. How I longed to praise and bless His holy Name! He gave me such sweet meditation in His Word, and often a song in the night. That verse was sweet to me:

"Goodness, immortal and divine,  
The bliss of endless day,  
The Lord my God has made to pass  
Before me in the way."

I felt like Ruth of old: "This people shall be my people, and their God my God"; and, "There will I be buried." I felt such a love and union to the dear pastor and people at The Dicker that I felt constrained to join them, and begged for divine guidance and help. It came under the ministry of the Word when Mr. Tyler preached from: "My times are in Thy hands," and other sermons; also by texts and verses being applied with divine power to my soul. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness." "Tell all who love the Lord below, The debt of love to Him you owe." "And I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them" (Ezek. xxix. 21).

"And canst Thou, wilt Thou, yet forgive,  
And bid my crimes remove?  
And shall a pardoned rebel live,  
To speak Thy wondrous love?"

Feeling constrained to join the church at Zoar, The Dicker, 1963,\* I spoke to our beloved pastor, and was very kindly received by pastor, deacons and church. It was a time of deep exercise and trial of faith as well as rejoicing. Soon afterwards, feeling very tried, Satan telling me that I was not a real Christian, our dear pastor preached from the text: "For he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Mr. Tyler was led by the Holy Spirit into the deep recesses of my soul, and the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance some of the blessings He had given me in the past, and I was enabled to plead that the Lord would

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\*We commend the step our friend took. Having been led to move in providence, and feeling a real union to the pastor and church, she gladly came before them (though in old age and affliction) to tell them what the Lord had done for her soul, and to unite with them as a member.

bless and help me for His great Name's sake. I was favoured with sweet meditation the next day and with a hope that, through His mercy, I should endure to the end "as seeing Him who is invisible."

Miss Beesley having given an account of her life up to the time of joining the church at The Dicker, her manuscript, covering the last six years of her life, assumes diary form (though usually without dates). It consists almost entirely of profitable hearing times she enjoyed. The following are extracts.

*Jeremiah xxix. 11*

When our dear pastor preached from the text: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end," as he was led to speak of God's eternal thoughts of mercy, love and peace to His people in His well-beloved Son, to give them an expected end, the Holy Spirit applied the word with divine power. It was such a sealing time to my soul. I wept for joy and longed to be taken to heaven. Jesus brought me, a poor, vile sinner, into His house of wine.

I woke one morning with the verse:

"I shall sleep sound in Jesus,  
 Shall in His likeness rise,  
 To love and to adore Him,  
 To see Him with these eyes;  
 My kingly King in heaven,  
 My presence doth command,  
 Where glory, glory dwelleth,  
 In Immanuel's land."

I really felt the Lord was about to take me to Himself, and I longed to be with Him. Though spared a little longer, He has given me to feel—"to lean upon His arm; His breast has been my sweet repose."

*Isaiah lxxv. 8; 17*

When our dear pastor took for his text: "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it," I felt very tried, and felt I was fruitless and should be cut off. The trial was very keen and Satan tempted me not to go to the Lord's table the following Sabbath, telling me that if I went, I should eat and drink damnation to myself, and should soon be in hell. However, I ventured to go. Our dear pastor was most solemn and searching, his text being: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." He referred to the new wine in the cluster. Also, he referred to the man who came seeking fruit for three years and found none. He said to the dresser of the vineyard, Cut it down. Mr. Tyler spoke of a tree being cut down to see if there was any sap. I felt cut down, and had no sap. But immediately the blessed Holy

Spirit led me to the pierced side, hands and feet of our Redeemer, and gave me His witness that they were pierced for me. O the blessed exchange of joy for mourning! A new heaven and earth! My heart did rejoice in Christ my Saviour.

When it came to sitting at the Lord's table, I felt His dear, sacred presence there. How I longed to glorify His Name! Hymns 158 and 667 were so sweet. The dew lay all night upon the branch, and I wished to be drawn closer and closer to Jesus as the living Vine.

*Job xlii. 10*

I received another token when our beloved pastor took for his text: "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job lost family, health, substance, friends. I have lost most of my dear ones. I lost my health, substance and a lot of dear friends. I often wondered where the scene would end; I was in the furnace of affliction. Yet how God graciously brought me through and enabled me to praise Him for all through which I had passed! Yes, as it was with Job, in many ways and spiritually, God gave me twice as much as I had before. I felt I could say with Job, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth . . . Yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and not another." In heaven my choicest treasure lies.

*Haggai ii. 9*

I felt I had been given a little of His beauty for my sin and shame, and beheld His glory. I felt His blessed presence with me as I sat at His table. The verse came so sweetly:

"How sweet and awful is the place,  
With Christ within the doors."

How sweet, after severe afflictions and testings of faith, to realise that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus! Afflictions and keen trials working together for good brought me to The Dicker, the house of God where He has helped, tried, reproved and sweetly blessed me.

*Proverbs xxiii. 18*

At the prayer meeting, our beloved pastor spoke from: "For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off." It was a special word to me as I went to the meeting begging of God to give me another token for good. Our dear pastor could not have been led to a more suitable text—an end of sin, trial and affliction; then heaven at last.

*Ezekiel xxxvii*

At times I should have almost despaired of having eternal life had it not been for Ezekiel xxxvii. The very dry bones have often said, "Can my dry bones live again?" But, blessed be His holy Name, He has caused breath to enter into them and they have lived—only through His sovereign mercy. At times I have felt to be in the grave, buried in doubts and fears, Satan's temptation, feeling I should be buried in hell. Yet the Lord's word came, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." O what a mercy it is when He does this; we feel to live again! When I am directed to "the bleeding wounds of my incarnate God," when I can "weep o'er His pierced hands and feet, and view His wounded side," this is a little bit of heaven begun below.

*Jeremiah xxxi. 20*

On Lord's day evening, September 20th, I was taken to Edmonton Chapel and heard dear Mr. R. J. Morris. I was feeling sad and far off. Mr. Morris read Hosea xiii and xiv and commented on the words, "So will we render the calves of our lips," and said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." He spoke of the many mercies we had received. We cannot praise Him enough for all His mercies to us so we must ask His dear people to come and help us to praise Him. Text was: "Is Ephraim My dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore My bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord." Ephraim—"fruitful in the land of my affliction." My hard heart began to soften. I hoped the Lord had given me a little fruit in my affliction. I felt I had often gone astray like Ephraim; the dear Lord had chastised me. I could only pray, "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned." I knew only the Lord could turn me. I longed for true repentance and godly sorrow for my sins, and to experience His everlasting covenant love again; for the Lord saith, "I will surely remember him still and have mercy on him." I felt helped; but when Mr. Morris quoted the verse:

"I've bound thee up secure,  
Midst all the rage of hell;  
The curse, thou never shalt endure,  
For I'm unchangeable,"

the dear Lord came right into my heart, and I felt that He was mine. "He brought me into His banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." The Lord gave me sweet meditation on these things for some time.

*1 Samuel vii. 12*

Our beloved pastor was led to take for his text: "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it *between* Mizpeh and Shen, and

called the name of it, Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." After a very searching time as to whether we were the true children of God (had Jesus borne our sins in His own body?), I felt very tried; but Mr. Tyler so begged of God to give him the real meaning of why the stone had to be set *between* Mizeph and Shen, and like a flash the answer came. *Mizpeh* meant "God's care and watchfulness over His people"; *Shen* meant "a dangerous piece of rock, a precipice." Put *between* the two—Jesus, our blessed Mediator, who stood between God and hell for His people. My hard heart was completely broken. I felt Jesus stood in my place, and died for my sins, and rose again for my justification. It was sweet to go to the Lord's table to remember Him in His dying love for such a wretch as I. I felt enabled to raise my Ebenezer stone, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

*Genesis xliii. 11*

Such a help received under a sermon from my beloved pastor from the text given him: "If it must be so now"—Jacob's great sorrow at the loss of Joseph, whom he thought was dead, and now he was called to part with Benjamin. He felt like we do—that all these things were against him. Yet God was making all things work together for his good. We have just the same thoughts in our wicked hearts. But God was preparing Jacob for this trial by the words, "If it must be so now." As God prepares us for trials, He never takes away our all, Himself He gives us still. He always gives us more than He takes away. I have proved this in my long, painful affliction. In affliction we learn more of His worth, His preciousness and suitability. Jacob could say, "It is enough." So can we when we see Jesus, our Elder Brother, living and interceding on our behalf.

*Exodus xxxiii. 19*

January 7th, that verse was given me:

"Thou shalt see My glory soon,  
When the work of grace is done;  
Partner of My throne shalt be;  
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou *Me*?"

Then going to God's house that evening, I received such a sweet confirmation when my beloved pastor was led to take for his text: "And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee." Moses prayed that he might see God's glory, and this text was God's answer. As our dear pastor was led a little into beholding His glory, I felt the Holy Spirit had shown me a little of His glory—once in particular when I felt I could hold no more while in the body. How great is His goodness which He has made to pass before me in the way, especially so in these years of affliction, both spiritually, in providence, and bodily! I felt completely

overcome with God's great goodness to such a wretch as me. He would have been just in cutting me off, yet He had compassion on me. I so often have to ask God to help me in movements of my body, and spiritually, that Jesus will intercede for me, pardon my sins, and enable me to go to His house where He feeds me by the way.

*Psalm lv. 22*

Thursday evening text was: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." The burden has not been removed, but He has given me sustaining grace. I have been enabled to think of the great burden our precious Redeemer bore—His people's sins (and, I have a sweet hope, mine). I have had some sweet relief in having a little fellowship with Him in His sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane. It's the safest place to dwell there. Keep me, Lord, at Thy dear feet. That sweet verse was given me early morning:

"Yes, dearest Lord, 'tis my desire,  
Thy wise appointments to admire,  
And trace the footsteps of my God,  
Through every path in Zion's road."

*Isaiah lii. 14*

I have often felt I could willingly bear all my infirmities if only the power of Christ could rest on me more. One morning on waking, the dear Lord gave me the words: "Look on His wounded hands and read your name in crimson lines." It was a solemn, searching day when our beloved pastor took for his text: "His visage was so marred more than any man." He described the intense sufferings of Christ—no sorrow like His! The Holy Spirit led me a little into the sufferings of our dear Saviour. I felt to "see in His dear, sacred face, Ten thousand sins forgiven."

*Exodus xiv. 13*

I went to God's house feeling very tried. Our beloved pastor was led to take for his text: "Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." He spoke so well of how the Israelites were hemmed in on every side, and how God's people are often in a similar position in spiritual matters, tempted by the devil who tells them that God has forsaken them. I had the same temptation for some years. O the midnight darkness I passed through! But the dear Lord delivered me again when brought into deep affliction and helplessness in body. I was brought to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." The Lord mercifully paid my debt by His sufferings, death, blood, righteousness, and His glorious resurrection and intercession. I did not want to sleep that night for joy. His precious promises overwhelmed my soul.

*Concluding entry*

We must be led to suffer with Him in a little measure for Him to make His divine goodness pass before us in redemption, in sanctification, in affliction and in providence. I felt He had made His divine goodness to pass before me many times when sorely afflicted and tried. How I long to crown Him Lord of all!

“ We too amid that sacred throng,  
Low at His feet would fall,  
Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”

Amen.

[At the end, Miss Verrall was unable to look after her dear friend. Miss Beesley was grateful to be found a place in the Bethesda Home at Tunbridge Wells where she passed away peacefully on December 25th, 1969. As had been her desire, she was buried by her beloved pastor at Zoar Chapel, The Dicker.]

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## J. C. PHILPOT'S ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES XII. The Occult

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*We feel the following answer may be timely. Recent newspaper reports concerning the prevalence of witchcraft in this country have been alarming. Frightening things have been reported about the ouija boards that, up till recently, were on sale for children. We would urge on any who may be tempted to dabble in the occult (or supernatural) to flee from it as from the devil—whether it be spiritualism, fortune telling, or whatever form it may take.*

*J. C. Philpot here answers a request to give his opinion on mesmerism [hypnotism], table-moving, etc.*

Into the scientific portion of the above inquiry we shall not enter, nor venture any opinion how much of the mysterious agencies referred to is due to natural, though hitherto unexplained, causes, and how much to nervous or mental influence. The time may come when much which now appears utterly inexplicable from natural causes may be as simple and as intelligible as the electric telegraph. But science in our pages is wholly out of place. Our business is with the church of God; and as many fearful evils are incidentally connected with some of the subjects above referred to, and these seem making some progress in the professing church, we believe that a word of warning is at this time eminently needful. It is this feeling, and not any desire or intention to introduce such subjects into our pages, which has induced us to notice the inquiry here addressed to us.

Evil, for the most part, has very gradual beginnings, and it will be found so in this instance. Let us see how the matter works. As we have never witnessed, and willingly never would

witness, any of these exhibitions, we speak only from what we have read and heard. The point to which we shall chiefly confine ourselves is *Table-turning*, as that is most likely to be the first link in the chain of evil. It has been discovered, we believe, that if a party of persons sit round a table, and put their hands upon the rim in a complete circle, the fingers and thumbs being all in contact, after a certain time the table, without any other impulse, will turn round, apparently of itself. Whether this be owing to the accumulated impulse of pressure, or to electric agency, is not known. But as a novel and curious experiment, this Table-turning is much practised, we understand, in worldly parties. It affords excitement and amusement, and brings young people of both sexes into close relationship and contact. Now see how it creeps into professing families. The young people, whose hearts are in the world, of professing or gracious parents, having heard so much of this wonderful Table-turning, want to make the experiment, some long winter evening, as a piece of innocent amusement. "Surely," they say, "there can be no harm in putting our hands on a table." The old people, fond of their children, and seeing no harm in so simple a thing, look on. "Come, father," says a fond and privileged daughter, "we want another hand just to make the circle complete." How easy to comply! how seemingly harmless!

Now, if the matter began and ended here, we do not know that we could say much against it. Such amusements are best forborne; but young people of a certain age cannot be tied up as little children. But Table-turning does not end here. It has been made a link to draw on things which are enough to chill the blood and make the hair move on the head; for these seemingly innocent table-turnings have become associated with "spirit rappings," one of the most fearful depths of Satan ever brought to light. Would our spiritual readers think it possible that in numerous parties there is now being carried on a communication with departed spirits, by means of rapping on a table? How this is done, or professed to be done, let us not further say. Concerning evil it is best to be ignorant. It is the opinion of many that the whole is fraud and collusion; but making every allowance for this, we have heard and read of answers given to questions through this medium which can only be attributed to Satanic agency.

This infidel age may laugh at wizards and witches, and deny all intercourse with Satan; but the unerring Word of God has so plainly spoken of witchcraft in the Old Testament, and of a diabolical possession in the New, that no believer can deny the fact of Satanic agency and influence. The same infidel spirit which throws discredit on the history of the Witch of Endor, explains away the miracles of the Old Testament; and the same German rationalism which makes possession by an evil spirit to be merely

lunacy, resolves Christ's miraculous cures into mere natural influences and operations. A child of God should set his face against, and stand utterly apart from, all venturing on Satan's ground. Mesmerism, Table-turning, etc. are all fraught with the utmost peril were they even free from all suspicion of Satanic influence. There is something in these mysterious phenomena, bordering as they do on the supernatural, which has a most prejudicial effect on the mind; or can they be witnessed without exciting the nervous system—that part of our human constitution to which Satan seems to have peculiar access, and on which he mainly works.

But apart from these considerations, well worth the reflection of every Christian parent, there is something in the whole matter exceedingly repulsive to the spiritual mind. How jealous was God of old, in the case of His peculiar people, of any approach to magic or witchcraft! "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," was His stern command. Besides, were these matters altogether free from suspicion, we may well ask, What has a spiritual mind to do with such exciting subjects? What a door may they not open to the infidelity which is ever ready to rush in and fill the heart! What a foothold for Satan to work on the carnal mind! Taking, then, into consideration all the circumstances we have mentioned, and there are many others which time and space prevent us from noticing, our deliberate opinion is that godly parents should not suffer any such practices in their houses as mesmerising and Table-turning; and that members of churches, as well as all who desire to fear God in our congregations, especially in large towns, should be warned against participating in such doings. Let the young people be particularly restrained from making any attempts of this nature, and those of them who profess godliness be strongly cautioned against venturing upon any such dangerous ground as mesmerising, Table-turning, etc. Madness, we understand, has fearfully increased of late through these awful practices, and many participants in them are now in asylums.

At this season of the year, when even in godly families, the children being home from school, there is sometimes a little licence allowed, we have thought it right to lift up a warning voice, and have been induced more particularly to do so from learning that the practices alluded to are making fearful progress in many professing churches, and that even ministers and deacons have taken a part in them. If we are bidden to avoid even the appearance of evil, how much more from taking the first actual steps into it!

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There is no affliction so small, but we should sink under it if God upheld us not; and there is no sin so great, but we should commit it, if God restrained us not.

*Arrowsmith*

## BOOK NOTICES

**Spoils Won in the Day of Battle**, by Francis Hews; cloth bound with coloured dust jacket; 108 pages; 8 illustrations; price £1.25; published by Mr. E. J. Woodcraft; obtainable from Mr. J. Chapman, 36 Broad Street, Haverhill, Suffolk, and Mr. N. Roe, 36 Marlborough Road, Sheffield, S10 1DB.

This most interesting book is the spiritual experience of Francis Hews (b. 1768), sometime pastor of the Particular Baptist churches at Dunstable and Westoning. It contains good, clear, spiritual experience and the marked evidences of the work of the Holy Ghost. Francis Hews was very deeply led into the truth, at the beginning without human instrumentality. He knew both law and gospel, bondage and liberty. Evidently his ministry was most Christ-exalting and was richly blessed. Concerning his first sermon he writes:

“The next day, a Mrs. Culverhouse wished to see me, at whose house the minister from the chapel preached. Accordingly I went, and the business was for me to exercise my thoughts upon some Scripture, which they wished me to speak from on the next Sabbath evening. This I much opposed; but, after a time, agreed to try before a few, which I did, from these words, ‘Chosen of God, and precious.’ This was indeed a suitable passage for me as I had nothing that I wished to talk about but a precious, crucified Jesus.”

He began to preach at a very early age, appearing like a mere boy in the pulpit, and as well as poverty, he had to suffer bitter persecution for the truth's sake. Even his own family sorely persecuted him. Many attempts were made even to take his life, but the Lord delivered him. Nor was Satan idle in tormenting him with most awful temptations and blasphemies.

Yet in some ways this is a strange book. The language in some places is very extravagant, and it is hard to know what to say about the peculiar account of “A Nightmare Journey” (p. 50). The book lacks continuity. A godly uncle is introduced, and just as suddenly disappears without us knowing what happened to him. Suddenly, Francis Hews refers to his wife without there being any previous intimation that he has married. It is as if certain links are missing. But above all, the book ends so suddenly with Francis Hews still a young man (only 29) just commencing his Dunstable pastorate. We are left feeling eager to know how he fared; what happened to him; when and where he died; what course he steered in later life. (Surely some introductory note was needful?)

The book is nicely compiled, with a coloured dust jacket showing Waddon Chase, and with eight photographs showing other places connected with his life and ministry.

There is a sweet account of how he was raised up to a hope, through conversation with his uncle and reading a little book he lent him, *The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys*. He writes:

“I enjoyed a Bethel indeed. I found the Rose of Sharon was the Lord Jesus Christ; and so sweetly was He discoursed of in His names, characters, offices, and relations unto His people, that I felt my heart enraptured while I read. After I had done reading, my uncle conversed with me about faith in Jesus Christ. I listened attentively, my very soul being in the subject; and that these were the things I needed to know to the peace of my soul, I was then quite certain.

“On my return home, my mind was wholly taken up with thoughts of Jesus Christ, and faith in Him, as crucified for sinners. I went upstairs into a little room, and found my soul sweetly drawn out in prayer that God would, above all things, make known the Lord Jesus as crucified unto me. Nor did I ever feel such heart-melting before the Lord before, nor such sweet drawings of love, into the comforts of

Scripture, as now. Many passages opened to my mind, endearing unto me the blessed Son of God; one in John xiv. 6: 'Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,' and also that portion. 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh' (Heb. x. 19, 20). From these Scriptures, I was blessed with a discovery of God's appointed way unto Himself."

**The Crucified Conqueror**, by Norman R. Perry; cloth bound with coloured dust jacket; 62 pages; price 80p; published by Hughes & Coleman Ltd., Spar Road, St. Faiths Industrial Estate, Norwich NOR 87N.

This little book is of a completely different nature from most that are sent to us to review. On each left hand page throughout is a different, most beautiful, coloured picture—a shady wood, a mountain scene, a rushing stream, a rocky path, a forest in autumn, an ancient church, a display of flowers. From page to page on the opposite side runs a poem on the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The publishers suggest that this is a suitable book to give as a present, and express their desire that those who read might be brought to worship at the feet of the crucified Conqueror.

On the fourth page, "the sweat *like* blood" would be better "the sweat of blood."

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### PRAISE FOR THE INCARNATION

Sweeter sounds than music knows,  
Charm me in Emmanuel's Name;  
All her hopes my spirit owes  
To His birth, and cross, and shame.

When He came the angels sung,  
"Glory be to God on high!"  
Lord, unloose my stammering tongue,  
Who should louder sing than I?

Did the Lord a Man become  
That He might the law fulfil,  
Bleed and suffer in my room,  
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?

No, I must my praises bring,  
Though they worthless are and weak;  
For, should I refuse to sing,  
Sure the very stones would speak.

O my Saviour, Shield, and Sun,  
Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend,  
Every precious name in one,  
I will love Thee without end.

John Newton (1725-1807)

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We ministers should not only be like dials on a wall, or like watches in our pockets, to teach the eye; but like clocks and alarms to ring to the ear. Aaron must wear bells as well as pomegranates. The prophet's voice must be a trumpet, whose sound may be heard afar off. A sleeping sentinel may be the loss of a whole city.

Hart

## OBITUARY

**Joseph Lee** died on August 6th, 1971, aged 80. For the past 45 years he had attended Ebenezer Chapel, Edmonton. He was the son of John Lee of Burnham-on-Crouch, and brother to Jabez Lee of Trowbridge. He loved to read the Word of God, and the blasphemy of this present age was a very great grief to him.

In June, 1971, the words came very clearly to him: "Thou shalt see my glory soon." This was a few weeks before his end. Hymn 220, verse 7.

From particulars sent by his daughter.

**Robina Bowden**, an esteemed member of the church at Zoar, Bradford, died on January 17th, 1972, aged 75. Our loss is great but for her to die was gain—"absent from the body, present with the Lord." Her pastor had many tokens that she was among those dear women who "laboured with me in the gospel," and her conversation and walk bore this testimony, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."

From childhood she had been brought to the Lord's house where her parents and grandparents had attended. Yet she had to say of those early years and early womanhood :

"In vanity I spent my youth,  
The thought now fills my heart with shame."

It was not until middle life, when under conviction of sin, she could say :

"How dreadful now my guilt appears,  
In childhood, youth and growing years;  
Before Thy pure discerning eye,  
Lord, what a guilty wretch am I."

There was a long period of "sowing in tears," but her ears were on the stretch seeking for Jesus.

She was arrested and powerfully moved in a sermon preached by the late pastor, Mr. W. B. G. Vaughan, The text was, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" She had previous to this seen the ordinance administered to one who from that time became a close friend. Under the same ministry of Mr. Vaughan she was led, fed and among other Scriptures this was applied with power: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The time of love did come, and with joy and a holy boldness she followed her Lord and was baptized the first Lord's day of January, 1942. Since then she has been a consistent walker, a loyal follower and faithful member, a willing and able helper in things pertaining to the Lord's house, manifesting the graces spoken of women professing godliness, wearing those hidden things of the heart, a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. She well knew who gave these graces, for by nature she confessed to oft feeling the opposite.

Once when in a sore trial, she was much helped. She wrote:

"I dreaded this. I felt I must have something to lean upon, especially that morning. I did ask the Lord not to leave me. Just before I left the house I looked at the text on my calendar. It was, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' My fears were taken away."

Soon after this she became ill and had to see her doctor. The end came suddenly and under strange and mysterious dealings—yet we believe in all things ordered well. The house in which she lived was in a clearance area and extracts from two letters will reflect her exercises and concern.

"I feel I must write and tell you that I have today signed deeds of conveyance for a house which became vacant unexpectedly. This contemplated move has caused me much exercise of mind; needless to say my constant prayer has been Exod. xxxiii. 15: 'If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' I felt I wanted it to be all of the Lord's work and not mine. I asked that the door might be closed if it was against His will that I should move. I wrote two letters to the Town Clerk and received no reply. I cast this burden on the Lord and felt at 'wits' end corner.' The following day a letter arrived from the Town Clerk in which he said they would buy and take over the whole responsibility of it and I had not to worry any more. I just wept for joy at the goodness of the Lord in it all. If all goes well I should be able to move in about ten days' time.

"I have been especially upheld for some time now by two texts, the first going back to August 4th, pastor's evening text at Bradford: 'Be still, and know that I am God.' How I have had to plead that He would make me still, for I could not be still unless He did! The other was the following Sunday, August 8th, your text was: 'Seek good and not evil that ye may live; so the Lord, the God of Hosts, shall be with you.' I felt only the God of Hosts could meet my needs. You announced at the commencement of the afternoon service you felt you must take the same text again, and I felt I could not hear enough of it. This was followed by: 'It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.' This too was very choice to me. I am resting on the strength promised in Isa. xxx. 15: 'In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,' and I do feel that when He has begun He will complete for me, as Mr. C. said on Sunday, 'The Lord knows the beginning from the end. He knows what He is doing and is not obliged to tell us.' I hope to tell the friends on Sunday about it, but thought it best to write to you in more detail." (Written December 17th, 1971.)

On January 12th, soon after she had moved into her new home, we heard that Robina was very ill. On the 13th January we visited her and found her extremely weak and short of breath. During our conversation two lines were quoted:

"His love in times past forbids me to think,  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."

After reading and prayer we took leave of her and her parting word was, "Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review confirms His good pleasure to help me quite through." The same evening was our prayer meeting and I informed the friends of her changed condition and together we sought the Lord's face for her.

On the following day she became worse and her doctor advised removal to hospital at once. When we saw her on Sunday afternoon she was in a semi-conscious state and no conversation was possible. Later in the afternoon she rallied and to a friend said, "Tell the friends, He has supplied all my needs until now." The next morning the call came and she was gone, gone we believe "to be with Christ which is far better."

B.W.

**Millicent Ranger Bentley** passed away on May 8th, 1972, at the Bethesda Home, Harpenden, having received the most loving care the two-and-a-half years in residence there. She was 88.

She was brought up by godly parents and from her early days attended chapel. She has spoken of the time when a deacon of the church reproved her with other girls for their light and bad behaviour in the chapel. This reproof went right home to her and made her to realize that though she was attending chapel, what a sinner she was,

and from that time she became much concerned about her state before God. This exercise was with her for some years after and eventually she was led on and at 25 years of age she was baptized and joined the church. [We regret we have no details of how she was brought to Christ and raised up to a hope.] Her after life brought with it a constant concern, and she ever sought for a further confirming of the work of grace and as her years lengthened out, she was much helped by the words given to her: "Thou shalt see my glory soon, When the work of grace is done."

In August, 1969, she went into the Home and for some time was enabled to attend Ebenezer, Luton, and helped much under the ministry there. One particular Sunday she could not go out and settled down to hear the relay from Bethel, Luton, but was disappointed as it was not clear enough to hear, so she switched it off and settled down to read one of Mr. Popham's sermons. When she finished reading she switched on the relay again; she now heard better, and the last hymn was being announced (303). The second verse brought such a blessing to her that it remained much with her to her end. With difficulty she sang, for her eyes were wet with flowing tears, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want; *More than all in thee I find.*" She felt that she had found Him whom her soul loved. This day became a very special day to her.

Soon after this she was brought to her final illness. She would often say, "I hope I am not deceived," but a few days before her death, the sting of death was removed and she would often say to the friend that was constantly with her, "Do you think He will soon come for me?"

In her extreme weakness she said without any prompting, "Why, my soul, art thou thus cast down? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him." Shortly before this, Mr. J. Hill had visited her and read to her Psalm xlii. At the close of the reading she said, "I hope I shall praise Him."

She passed away in the early hours of the morning on the 8th May and peacefully entered, we believe, into the promised rest.

At the service which was held in the Home, Mr. J. Hill based his remarks on Job. v. 26. He felt he could say she had come to her grave in a full age like as a shock of corn fully ripe cometh in in his season.

The interment was at Luton Cemetery, Mr. Hill saying he felt he could say "in sure and certain hope of joyful resurrection."

J.J.B.

**Arthur Gushlow**, member of the church at Zion, Leicester, for 57 years (formerly a member at Coventry), and much esteemed deacon for the past 37 years, died on May 8th, 1972, aged 91. Further particulars may follow.

I confess the devil is mighty, but he will never be almighty.

*Luther*

The works of men, without the blood of sprinkling, will be but as a withered leaf amidst the inextinguishable burning.

*Hervey*

Heaven is worth dying for though earth is not worth living for.

*Hall*

**Note:** As the pages of the November issue were wrongly numbered (351-382 instead of 321-352), this December issue begins with page 383, making the final page 414, instead of the usual 384.

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